

THE LUDGATE ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE

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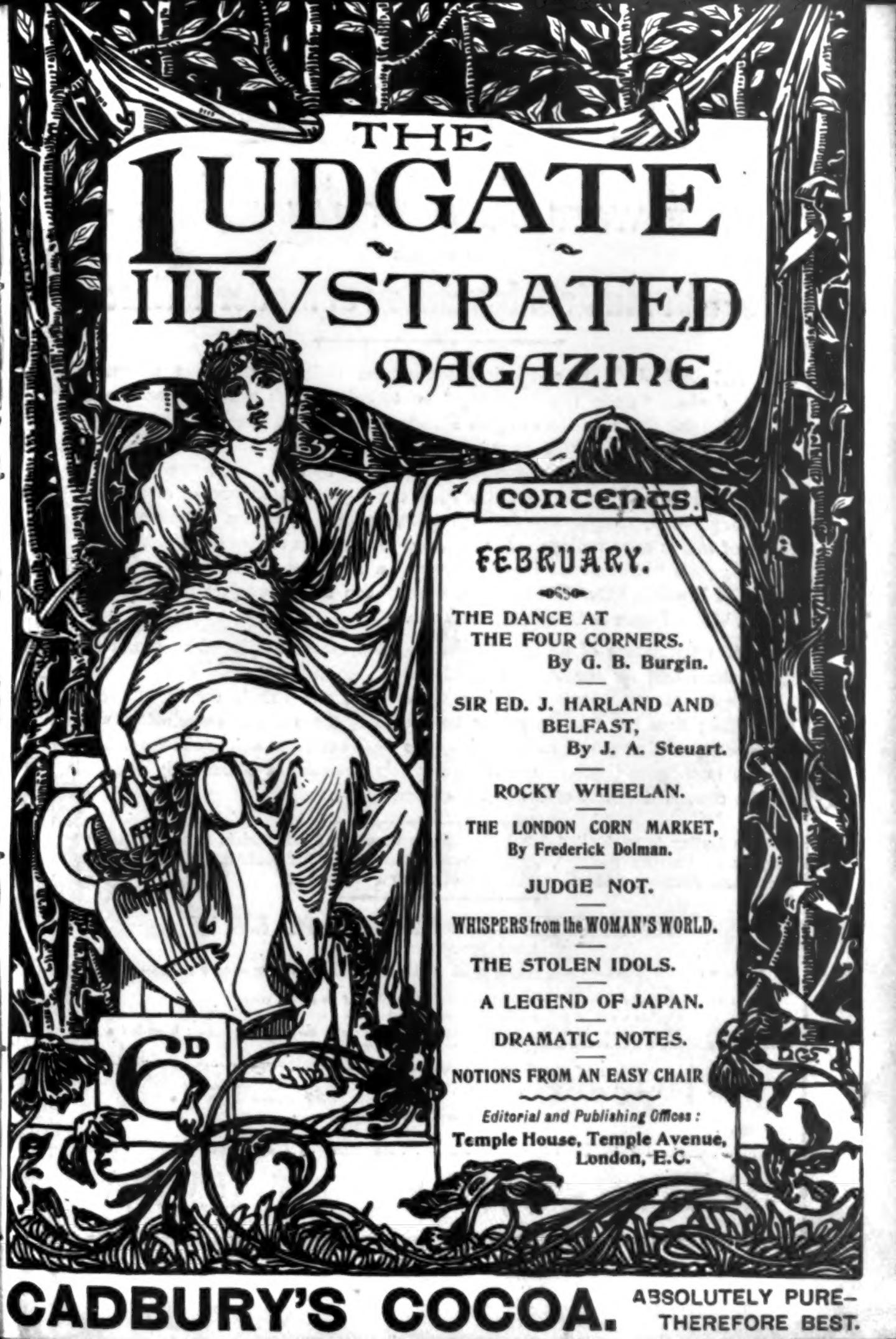
THE STOLEN IDOLS.

A LEGEND OF JAPAN.

DRAMATIC NOTES.

NOTIONS FROM AN EASY CHAIR

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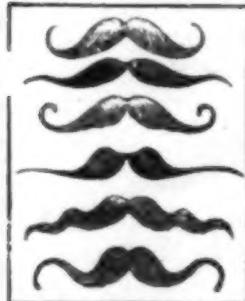
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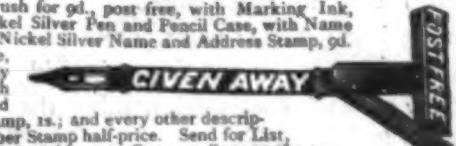
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WHEN Mrs. Sarah Mason got home from church on the morning of Sunday, March 18th (1894), she found her mother, Mrs. Annie Bailey, sitting in the easy-chair just as she had left her two hours before.

But then she was alive and well; now she was dead. Still, no one thought it strange; not even the coroner; for Mrs. Bailey was 121 years old. Of this there is plenty of proof. She died at Philadelphia.

Every incident like this sets us asking once more, What is the natural span of human life? Has it any natural span at all? Barring accidents and violence, why may not the majority of us live as long as Mrs. Bailey? If I say we might, you wouldn't believe me. You (I mean almost everybody) have such a stupid way of taking it for granted that there is some law, rule, or edict on the subject. Why, if your ideas of nature's purposes were right, I never should have had the pleasure of submitting the following letter for your perusal. Why not? Read it first.

"During Whit-week of 1891, whilst working out in the fields, I was taken with pain and extreme coldness across my stomach. After this I felt weak and languid, and could not get about as usual. My appetite was poor, and I had no relish for my meals. After eating I had cutting pains across my chest and at my sides. The gnawing pain and coldness at my stomach continued, nothing that I took giving me any relief.

"Being advanced in years, I thought my illness was on account of my age, and that I was breaking up.

"In the autumn of 1891 I read about the benefit Mr. Thorndyke, innkeeper at Eye, had derived from a medicine called Mother Seigel's Syrup. Thinking it might do me good, I got a bottle from Mr. Nurse, chemist, Eye.

"After I had finished that one bottle I found I could eat better, and my food agreed with me. This so cheered and encouraged me that I kept on taking the medicine, and was soon as strong and well as ever. Since that time I have kept in the best of health, being brisk, bright, and active, notwithstanding that I am 81 years of age. I tell all my friends

and neighbours that I attribute my good state of health to my use of Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup. Yours truly, (Signed) John Marriott, Bank House, Stradbrook, *vid* Wickham Market, February 15th, 1894."

Let us get our points in their proper order now. What did the Syrup do for Mr. Marriott? It cured him of an attack of indigestion and dyspepsia. What is that? It is a failure, more or less complete, of the digestive powers, located principally in the stomach. The result is immediate and serious. In proportion to the degree of the failure the body ceases to be fed. Continue this condition, and weakness, attended with many local ailments, is the inevitable consequence. And when the digestive or nutritive operation wholly ceases, death quickly follows.

In other words, health and life depend upon the digestion. The body is supported by means of it. We live only so long as we are able by food, through the digestion, to replace the bodily substance as fast as it is worn away by use. Let this wonderful process fail in our youth and we die in our youth. Let it remain but little impaired for a century and we shall live a century. For what are called "diseases," please remember, are merely various consequences of digestive weakness or collapse.

Mrs. Bailey lived to be 121 because her digestion bore all demands made upon it until then; and Mr. Marriott, threatened with digestive failure, finds himself brisk and hearty at 81 because Seigel's Syrup, the great restorer of digestive power, came to his rescue in time.

The moral of these facts is plain. Keep your watch in order and it will run long and well. Do the same with your body—the digestion being understood, and treated as the mainspring. When aught is wrong with it a few doses of the Syrup will probably be all you will need. That is, if you act on the earliest warnings.

Age, then, is not a matter of accident or luck; it is a matter of taking care of yourself. Keep an eye on your stomach, and a bottle of Seigel's Syrup in your cupboard, so that at 81 you may say with John Marriott, "I am brisk, bright, and active."

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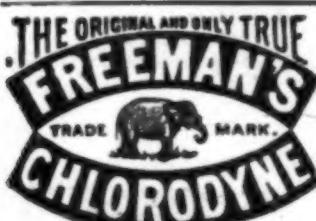
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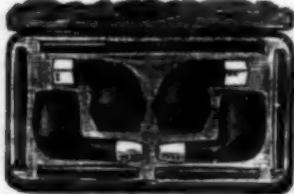
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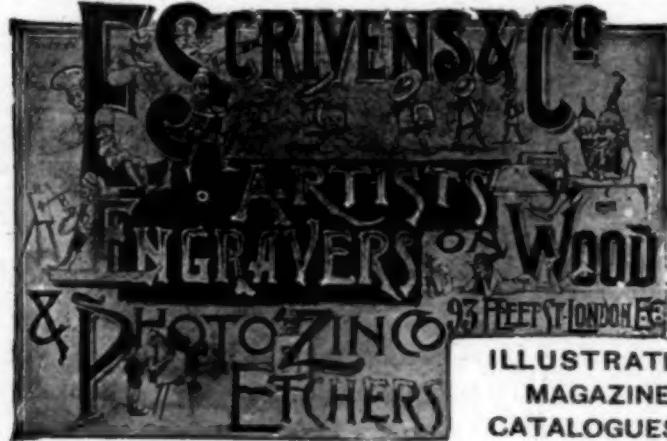
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The Ludgate Illustrated Magazine.

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THE DANCE AT THE FOUR CORNERS

"THE SUPPOSED MISS MATHEWS TORE OFF HER WIG"—[Page 385]

The Dance at the Four Corners.

BY G. B. BURGIN.

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CHAPTER I.

CHILVEY JAKE.

CHILVEY JAKE was a new factor in the social life of the Four Corners and "The Hill," villages situated within a few miles of each other, and which, although occasionally on friendly terms, were constantly disagreeing with regard to subjects of social etiquette and commercial aggrandisement. This gilded desperado had suddenly appeared, after an unregretted absence of ten years, at his native place, "The Hill," with money in his pouch—money which he frequently brought down to the Four Corners to spend in the elegant dissipations suitable to a gentleman of picturesque appearance and uncultured leisure. His conversation was habitually garnished with strange oaths, after the traditional manner of cowboys.

Chilvey Jake also told beautifully imaginative stories of his own prowess and skill. In short, his sanguinary record—according to Chilvey Jake's own showing—indicated that he had killed Indians, fellow-cowboys, bears, cattamounts, and everything else which could be thought of in the way of refined slaughter. Hence his return to "The Hill," with occasional descents on the Four Corners, to recruit ere again wandering forth on the trackless prairie in search of fresh victims. He generally made the foregoing confidential statement in his cups to Old Man Evans and Ikey Marston, who were inclined to think that "this yer alleged cowboy," Chilvey Jake, knew more about being jailed himself than of corralling cattle. They also, in the elegant privacy of Old Man's log-cabin down by the Ottawa

shore, further surmised that so high-spirited and impetuous a being would find the refined habits and classic tastes of Four Corners folk pall upon him after the bovine excitement of cattle punching; that, in short, there was every probability of Chilvey Jake's one day becoming more intimately acquainted with "the rope" than he now appeared to be. "A sort of sassy an' peart chap I don't have no objections to," said Ikey, meditatively, "but a dime novel feller as wants to howl down the place 'ithout settin' up drinks for the oldest inhabitants, I don't take no stock in. He's too permiskus for me. Too permiskus! That's what's the matter with him; an' he'd better move on to a more s'lubrious spot, whar he kin be done justice to, so to speak. If he don't, thar'll be trouble with the gals, you see if thar won't."

Old Man Evans nodded thoughtfully, as he slacked that burning thirst which was one of his most prominent characteristics. "It sorter looks," he said, cheerfully—"It sorter looks, Ikey, as if there mout be a little fun a-loomin' round. Times ain't half what they used to be. When I first come, there was a fun'r'l a week, sure. Now we're all so dumb polite nobody'll draw on nobody else; thar ain't a—what was the word his reverence used last Sunday?"

"I dunno; I don't go to that new gospel shop," said Ikey, disdainfully. "I met Sally Wrong, an' she said somethin' about a scinter—"

"That's it," said Old Man, cheerfully. "You'd be a great scholard, Ikey, if you'd let your mind run to it. Scintiller; that's it. I ain't a scintiller of a doubt that chap Chilvey Jake'll want to git to runnin' with Sally. The Reverend Arthur won't like that, sot though he

is on them new-fangled English ways of his'n."

"I don't see," said Ikey, looking regretfully at the empty jug, "I don't see as how it matters a shuck what he minds. You're uncommon friendly with that white-faced chap."

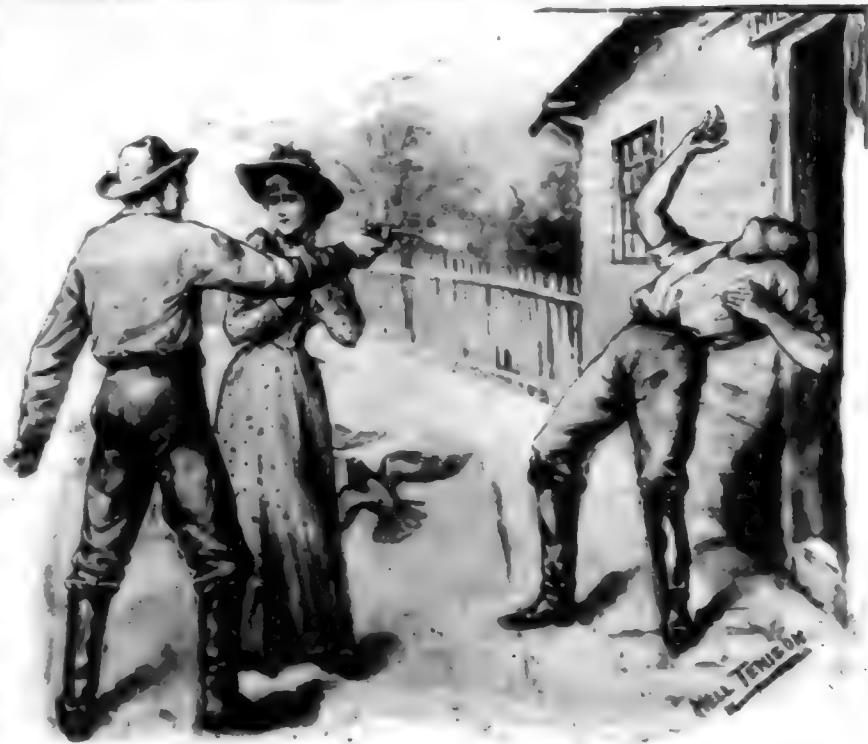
"Oh, I'm a trainin' of him in theerological disputes," said Old Man, cheerfully. "I've allers thought as how, if I hadn't been so fond of fun, I'd ha' gone in for doxology. I've flummoxed him lots of times; but it's poor fun to find him so set agin tar an' feathers an' every other joysome little excitement. If he knowed we'd a Vigilance Committee at the Four Corners he'd rear up an' either convert us or we'd have to shoot him, for the sake of peace an' quietness."

"Let's shoot then an' git rid of his dumb foolishness," said Ikey, promptly.

Old Man chuckled. "Sally's got him in tow. She'll put him through an' take the side outen him. He ain't a bad little chap, an' he's fond of Sally. I b'lieve he looks upon her as a temptation to be overcome, though he does take off his hat when she's walkin' down street. His English folk wouldn't hear of his marryin' a Four Corners girl. They'd expect a Lord Mayor's daughter at least, with a crown on her head an' a kitchenful of turtle."

"I guess we'll leave him to Sally," said Ikey, emptying the ashes from his corn-cob pipe with an air which implied that he washed his hands of the Parson, although the ablution was not strictly necessary. "These gospel ducks ain't much in my line, they ain't."

"Maybe he'll wish we had shot him, afore she's done with him," blandly re-



"EMPTIED FOUR BARRELS INTO THE POOR LAD"

marked Old Man. "The Reverend's got to come down to us or we've got to go up to him; an' I ain't given to climbin' at my age; not much. No, sir. It's a re-markable—a most re-markable—thing how soon that jug empties itself, Ikey, when you're anywheres round. You're the thirstiest man in the Four Corners."

Ikey nodded a good-natured assent at this unsolicited tribute to his powers and went back to his own shanty. As he entered the doorway, Sally Wrong came down the street, and was suddenly joined by Chilvey Jake, attired in all the bravery of a cowboy on the spree. Something the handsome girl said to him appeared to irritate Jake, for he drew a revolver and vented his spleen by firing at a hen as it ran across the sidewalk. The bullet missed the hen and glanced off a rock by the roadside. A young fellow named 'Lijah Fuller, who was employed in Miller's store, came out at that moment. Unfortunately, he saw the shot, and began to join in Sally's derisive mirth; whereupon Chilvey Jake promptly emptied four barrels into the poor lad, and stilled his laughter for ever.

Sally, her eyes filled with terror, ran

across the road and tried to lift the yeung fellow's head. The drunken ruffian cast one glance at his victim. "B'gosh, I'd better clear out; he's dead," and turned to flee, only to find himself confronted by the muzzle of Ikey's six-shooter.

"No you don't," said Ikey. "Not afore you settle for the killin' of 'Lijah Fuller."

Jake threw down the revolver, his cheeks livid with fear. "Curse you, Sally," he said; "it's all your doin'. It—it was an accident."

Ikey picked up the revolver. "Take him off to the gaol," he said to Old Man, "whiles I go in an' let Miller know about it."

When the Vigilance Committee came to hear of the shooting, Ikey was sternly censured for not having "plugged" the alleged cowboy on sight. "Since that Sheriff's bin sent down from Ottawa, he kinder fancies he runs the place," moodily declared the Captain of the Vigilants. "Them 'Hill' folk think they knock the spots off creation, an' we're too much afraid of 'em to touch him. We'll soon see about that. Every murderer's got to go to gaol and have lawyers to lie for him an' git him off, whiles the girls throw flowers into his cell an' ask him to marry 'em. It's time this yer foolishness ended. That 'fellow disgraced the town by blowin' all over the place. Why couldn't he keep to 'The Hill'; he wants a little plain hangin' to straighten him up a bit; an' he'll git it. It's about time, I reckon, as folk found out we kin run the place ourselves 'ithout outsiders."

Thus, for political reasons, as well as owing to his general wickedness and cowardice, the pusillanimous creature with the silver-plated revolver and top-boots was unanimously doomed to suffer the supreme penalty for taking the life of another. Somehow, as such things will, the decision of the Vigilance Committee to try Chilvey Jake for the murder of 'Lijah Fuller, got wind, and made bad blood at "The Hill." When it reached the ears of the good old gaoler at the Four Corners, he was the first to mention the matter to Chilvey Jake, who had treated him with vulgar insolence ever since his arrest. But the gaoler was not

disheartened. He had begun life as a circuit-rider, and the influence of those days was too strong to be shaken off. He meant to convert his prisoner and get him ready to make a cleanly exit from Life's stage when the proper time came. One morning, therefore, he somewhat unexpectedly appeared and carefully placed a large book upon the stool in Jake's little cell.

"If a man as has shot another man wanted to make his soul ready for the next world," he said, with gentle simplicity, "this yer book'll put him through straight, an' the pictures is real beautiful. Thar's one of Sampson" (he took up the book) "a-tyin' foxes' tails together with firebrands afore he lets 'em loose in the Philistines' cornfields. Why, it's jest the same as if it was yesterday. The foxes is the same, the corn's the same, an' the firebrands is our sins, which go a spreadin' round to burn an—"

Chilvey leapt to his feet with an oath.

"Curse your foxes," he said, dashing the Bible from out the old man's hands.

The gaoler reverently picked it up, and restored a loose leaf to the proper place.

"No good'll happen to anyone as despises the word of the Lord," he said. "I'm only one man agin many; you're under my charge, an' if them Vigilants catches me sleepin' on my watch-tower, so to speak, they'll string you up jest as if you was a dog. Yes, sir, an' riddle you with bullets to make sure thar ain't no mistake."

Chilvey Jake became livid with fear.

"I—I ain't fit to die," he whispered, turning his ghastly face to the wall. "I ain't ready neither."

"Oh, I've tackled worse sinners nor you," said the old man, producing his horn-rimmed spectacles; "an', by the grace of the Lord, if them Vigilants overpowers me, I'll have you ready for 'em, so as your poor, benighted soul shan't go down into the flamin' pit. You've shed man's blood an' have got to make your peace with God. We'll jest begin easy to-day." His blue eyes gleamed with holy zeal. "Man, I've got to make you feel you've an immortal soul."

But whilst the good man prayed on behalf of his prisoner, Chilvey Jake was not listening. He seemed to hear the stern voices of the Vigilants demanding that he should be given up to them. "Why don't you go an' block the doors?" he asked, feverishly. "Give me my pistol, I'll help you."

The old man looked up from the Sermon on the Mount. "'Tain't no good," he said with placid benignity— "'Tain't no good. They know they kin git in if they only settle me first. Most of 'em wouldn't hurt a hair of my head if they was to meet me on the street; but when they're after blood it's different. Now we'll just make ready, an' if they do git in, you'll be safe, whatever happens."

In the beautiful purity of his faith, the complete unconsciousness that anyone should not be glad to die after making his peace with God, the old gaoler failed to understand Chilvey Jake's craven fear. "It's like comin' in outen the rain an' the wind an' the storm to a beautiful home of peace an' love," he said. "No more fightin', nor drinkin', or wanderin' forth unto evil. You jest make up your mind to be saved, an' pray for all you're worth."

After the gaoler had gone off to attend to other duties, the braggart in his charge shivered with fear but could not bring himself to repent. He had shot half-a-dozen men in his time; their blood cried for vengeance from the ground. Stay . . . Couldn't he brain the gaoler with a stool, poor simple old fool, and escape that night? So good an old man was fit to die; according to his own showing, there could be no sin in killing him. The ruffian hesitated no longer, but picked up the stool, and placed it in a more convenient position so that he could swing it round to crack the old man's skull. Then he flung himself on his bed and waited.

But, to Chilvey Jake's intense chagrin, when the gaoler brought his food that evening he was accompanied by his wife, who stood outside the locked bars, revolver in hand, whilst the old man motioned Jake to sit down on the narrow bed.

"For a man as ain't afraid to die, you don't leave much to chance," said Jake, morosely.

The gaoler looked at him with gentle pity.

"I've got to save you, you poor soul, afore the darkness cometh an' you're dashed to the ground," he said. "How could I save you if you was to murder me, too? The Lord put it into my head you'd want to brain me with that stool, so as to git away an' murder others; but I ain't overcome. By'n bye, you too'll be wrastlin' with the Adversary, an' throw him. Now, you poor sinful soul, try agin."

It is to be feared that only the revolver at the door deterred Chilvey Jake from attacking the old man. The gaoler's wife (she had once possessed singular beauty) did not relax her vigilance for a moment; but, with quiet, watchful eyes, read into Jake's very soul, and saw the hidden murder lurking there. She kept watch and guard over her husband until he had finished his earnest prayer, and then brought him away.

"You ain't goin' into the gaol agin to-night?" she asked him.

The old man, weary with spiritual conflict, hesitated.

"I don't feel as if it was right to sleep whiles that poor crittur's still a-hoverin' unconvinced," he pleaded. "If I could only git him on his knees, I'd feel easier."

His wife gave an exclamation of anger.

"You think more of robbers an' thieves than me," she said, reproachfully. "He'll kill you yet."

The old man laid a tender hand upon her shoulder.

"The dear Lord came to save 'em," he said. "Thar's plenty to look after the others."

The woman's eyes began to stream. She kissed his white hair, his lips, his eyes.

"Go to bed," she said. "If the Vigilants come round, I'll hear them."

When the tired old man had lain down to rest, he fell asleep almost immediately. The woman remained gazing at him, her lips moving in silent supplication.

"He can't hold this ricketty old gaol against all them Vigilants," she said presently. "He'll fire on the crowd,

because it's his duty, an' then they'll git in an' kill him." She hesitated for an instant, slipped the cartridges out of her husband's revolvers, and hid them in the cupboard. Then she laid down beside him without taking off her clothes and slept.

The lantern in the little ill-furnished room gave forth a dim light which played upon the carpetless floor of rough pine, as the ticking of an old eight-day clock in one corner rang solemn changes on the words, "For ever—never! Never—for ever!" The old man slept as easily and peacefully as a child, but his wife's slumbers were troubled. After sleeping for a couple of hours, she sat up and strained her ears to listen to a faint knocking at the outer door. At first she thought it was made by the branches of a storm-swayed elm; then it sounded again as of someone in a desperate hurry. She slipped noiselessly across the hall and listened at the door.

"Let me in! Let me in!" cried the Rev. Arthur Dacre's voice.

The woman gave a sigh of relief.

"Oh, it's that English parson. I thought it was the Vigilants."

CHAPTER II. THE VIGILANTS.

SHE cautiously opened the door, and allowed the minister, a somewhat slight,



"SHE KEPT GUARD OVER
HER HUSBAND"

boyish-looking man, to enter. He stood for a moment wringing the rain from his clothes, then hurriedly fastened the door again.

"Your husband, where is he? Asleep?"

The woman put her finger to her lips and motioned to the young fellow to follow her through the hall into the gaol kitchen, which opened out from beyond the end of the passage.

The young man hastily followed her,

and held his chilled fingers to the comforting blaze proceeding from the huge wood-fire in the stove.

"Is your husband likely to sleep long?" he enquired of the woman.

She nodded. "He's worn out with tryin' to convert that scamp in there. The Vigilants are sure to be along presently, an' I don't want him disturbed. There'll be trouble enough then. I've drawn the cartridges from his pistols."

"You!" The young man stared at her in astonishment. "You! But it's his duty to fight for his prisoner."

"What's his duty to me?" the woman burst out passionately, "if he gits killed doin' it. It's my duty to fight for my husband. Duty won't bring him back if he gits shot, will it?"

"I don't understand," said the minister.

The woman shook her head impatiently. "He'll fight for his prisoner, an' if he kills somebody then the Vigilants 'll have to kill him; an' he's my

husband. "D'you think," she pointed with fierce contempt in the direction of the gaol—"D'you think I'm doin' it to save that cur in there?"

"But he must be saved," said the young fellow earnestly. "Sally loves him."

"I don't believe it. She wouldn't care a shuck for a feller like that; it's you she loves, or someone else who's worth it."

The minister looked at her fixedly.

"Mrs. Grey, when you were afflicted by sore doubts you told me I had been of great help to you, and that you would repay me for it some day. Will you help me now?"

"Yes," answered the woman; "anythin'."

"I want to change places with Chilvey Jake," the young man said buoyantly. "I've found myself forgetting my Christian profession and hating him; therefore—" He paused.

"Tharfore?" she repeated, in a whisper.

"The only thing left is to die for him; it is the one atonement I can make."

"But he ain't worth it."

"Sally would think so. Have you the keys?"

The woman went reluctantly away to fetch them. She came back, lantern in hand.

"I've had spiritual doubts lately," she said; "you've settled them to-night for ever."

"Then it is more than ever necessary that this should be done. The Sheriff is away beyond the Nation River; there isn't a man in the place who would help to hold the gaol. Is this the key? Thank you."

"You've no message for Sally?" she asked.

The young man smiled.

"Say I did it for her happiness," and he opened the heavy iron door.

Chilvey Jake was stretched in uneasy slumber upon his narrow bed. The gleam of the lamp awoke him. He sat up with a cry of terror.

"Don't be afraid," said the minister's reassuring voice. "Hurry up and change things with me. You've no time to lose. Mrs. Grey will let you out at the little side-door. There's a boat down at the wharf. When you've crossed to Green-

ville make for the Bush behind and get across the border."

Chilvey Jake looked at him incredulously, but did not hesitate to make the proposed exchange. "You're doin' this for Sally, curse you," he said, recognising one of his rivals. "I've a good mind not to go."

"Then stay an' hang like the cur you are," cried the woman's stern voice.

Chilvey Jake hesitated no longer, but quickly donned the parson's hat and cloak.

"Come!" said the woman contemptuously. "It's only puttin' off the evil day. You'll hang yet. You're the kind of acorn that's bound to grow on a tree."

The desperado followed her quickly to a little side-door at the back of the prison, but started nervously when the woman shot back the bolt, and a rush of cold fresh air blew into their faces. It was impossible to see a yard beyond the rays of the lantern.

"A fittin' place for you," said the woman, relentlessly. "Come back to gaol then if you daren't risk it."

Chilvey Jake shivered as he put one hand forth to touch the darkness. In the distance he could hear the roar of the rain-swollen river, the threshing tree-tops beating against one another with every gust of wind. Once behind the veil of that impenetrable gloom he was safe. The fellow hesitated no longer, but crept cautiously down the steps as the woman went back to the hall door, opened it wide, and listened to the cautious approach of a number of men. There was a whispered halt, and muttered, "Bring up the ram to break down the door. We'll have him afore Grey's awake. Don't hurt the old man, boys, unless he shoots."

The woman crept back noiselessly, fetched her lantern, and came to the door. She was instantly seized. "Hist!" she said; "here's the keys. I've emptied my husband's revolver. Mind, boys, I know you, an' if you hurt one hair of his head you shall all swing for it."

"It's Mrs. Grey," muttered the Captain. "You've got us out of a difficulty. Hadn't we better ram the door open, just to save appearances?"

"An' you'll give the prisoner a fair trial?" she asked, still standing on the threshold to gain time.

"In course," said someone, impatiently, "In course. But he's pretty sure to swing for all that. When anyone's seen the shootin' thar ain't much need of a trial; it's a little hangin' what's wanted—that's all."

The woman, satisfied that her husband and the minister were safe, withdrew to her own room, carefully putting the lantern in the middle of the corridor between the two rows of cells. It was known that there was no other prisoner in the gaol, and in the dim light afforded by the lantern, no one could possibly recognise the minister. When brought to trial, there would be ample opportunity for discovering who he was whilst undergoing the rude formalities of Lynch Law justice. The Vigilants might be angry at the deception practised upon them, but, by the time they found it out, that unsavoury and somewhat tinselly villain, Chilvey Jake, would in all probability have escaped.

The door crashed down with a noise which instantly woke the gaoler. Ere he could find his revolver, four masked men rushed into his room, and, after a desperate struggle, succeeded in tying the old man to the bed-post, though not before he had flung one Vigilant against the wall with a crash which nearly broke every bone in his body. Then the fine old man, his white hair floating wildly about him, his eyes blazing with anger at a soul being cut off before it was ripe for the harvest, suddenly began to pray aloud. The sound of shuffling steps was heard in the passage as the Vigilants passed through. Two of them came to fetch their wounded comrade, who lay groaning in a corner, and the gaoler was left alone with his wife, imploring to be freed from his bonds, so that he might comfort and sustain the doomed man in his last moments.

But the woman shook her head.

"Their blood's up; Fuller's blood's been shed; they'll have yours, too, if you ain't quiet."

She tenderly wiped the perspiration from his brow, brought the lantern into

the room, reached down a book from the shelf, and in slow, level tones began to read, the old man interrupting her occasionally with a fervent prayer that his work of redemption might be accounted complete, and the soul of Chilvey Jake might not go down in torment to the bottomless pit. When the woman had finished reading, she locked the bedroom door and unfastened her husband's bonds. They remained hand in hand, listening to the howling of the storm, the old man still praying for the passing soul of Chilvey Jake.

Meantime a very different scene was being enacted in a neighbouring store. True to their promise, the Vigilants, half in shadow and half in light, were busily engaged in trying their prisoner, who, seated on a barrel in the corner, obstinately refused to say anything until he was dragged to the centre of the room for the brief sentence to be pronounced.

"If you have anythin' to say," grimly remarked the President—"If you have anythin' to say, Mr. Chilvey Jake, why you shouldn't be hung for the murder of 'Lijah Fuller, you'd better git it out quick. The case has been proved up to the hilt by Sally Wrong an' the other witnesses, but I ain't a-goin' to pass sentence 'ithout givin' you a chance. Guilty, or not guilty?"

"Not guilty," rang out the prisoner's clear voice from the shadow of his cloak and hat. The man who was guarding him uttered an oath. Sally Wrong (she had been dragged from her bed by that zealous official, her father, Constable Wrong, to give evidence against the prisoner) darted forward with a little cry of alarm. Sally had given her testimony reluctantly enough, though the acquaintance with Jake had been none of her seeking; and when she recognised the minister's voice she was at his side in a moment.

"You've got the wrong man," she cried, hysterically. "You've got the wrong man." She pulled a revolver from the breast of her dress, and stood by the side of the somewhat diminutive cleric, like an angry lioness protecting its young.



"YOU'VE GOT THE WRONG MAN"

The Reverend Arthur smiled rather bitterly.

"The man you sought to murder has escaped; I took his place that you might not have the guilt of bloodshed on your souls. The breath of life is breathed into man's nostrils by God; by Him only shall it be taken away."

The leader of the Vigilants raised his revolver irresolutely.

"I ain't by no manner of means so sure of that," he said. "If you come a-meddlin' with things as ain't no business of yours, and bein' a stranger, so to speak, why in course you must take the consequences."

"In course," chimed in the cheerful voice of Old Man. "In course. Seein' as how the Parson ain't acquainted with our little ways an' we've been real friendly with him a-trainin' him, it wouldn't be the square thing to go an' spoil all our fun. Parson's a square man. 'I've let that t'other chap git away,' says

he; and 'an' I'm not the man to disappoint the boys on an occasion like this yer lynchin.' 'Sides, bein' a parson, thar ain't no harm done. He's fit to go, though's it's a dead sure thing that skunk of a Jake warn't. It's all fair an' square ain't it, Parson?"

"Yes," said the Parson contemptuously; "that's all right, from your point of view, Evans."

Old Man looked at him compassionately.

"Bein' a stranger in these yer parts," he said, "in course you don't know as it ain't etiquette to mention names on occasions like this. But you an' me bein' friends, so to speak, an' havin' disputed together on doxological pints, I'm willin' to overlook it, an' if thar's any little message or anythin' as I can send to your friends, why, thar ain't no meaness about me; I'll jest put out straight an' do it, an' have 'em sent home all cumferable an' friendly like."

Old Man looked round upon his neighbours with the air of one who had been magnanimous under circumstances where magnanimity was the last thing to be expected.

The Reverend Arthur turned to Sally, who, with flashing eyes and pointed revolver, still stood at bay, covering Old Man in a manner which evidently caused that worthy a little uneasiness.

"Put it down, Sally—put it down," he urged gently. "Them things has a way of goin' off when folks ain't used to 'em. You'd better be careful."

"If it do go off," said Sally, with the cheerful directness which was one of her most prominent characteristics, "you may bet your boots, Old Man, that it will hit something."

Old Man looked uneasy, as he stood out from the group of his friends, and the torchlight shone on Sally's shining revolver.

"If it does go off, Sally," he said pacifically, "I reckon I sha'n't be able to bet about anythin'. It bein' sorter cold an' onladylike to be out at this time o' night, mebbe you'd better sling home agin. You mout know as me an' Ikey'll attend to the remains for friendship's sake."

"Ikey will have enough to do to attend to his own remains," retorted the wrathful Sally, "as well as yours, if you don't stop this foolishness. Now, you just clear out, and get the right man—if you can see straight enough to know him."

This ungenerous allusion to a slight obliquity of vision on the part of Old Man touched him in his tenderest point.

"Seein' as how you're gittin' real onladylike an' personal," he said gently—"Seein' as how you're gittin' real onladylike an' personal, Sally, an' ain't no consideration for the feelins of them as brought you up, I ain't goin' to have nothin' more to do with this yer business. I resign. I've bin a member of the Committee for over forty years, an' now you comes an' insults my grey hairs."

Sally laughed recklessly,

"I meant your squint, Old Man, not your grey hairs. Eh, what?" The

Reverend Arthur had again plucked at her sleeve. "Don't bother me. I must keep my eye on Old Man, or he'll be trying to rush us. He's as trustworthy as a crocodile."

The leader of the Vigilants came forward irresolutely.

"If you wasn't a parson —" he began. Then he stopped. "Promise to say nothin' about this an' we'll drop it."

The Reverend Arthur hesitated.

"He'll promise," said Sally, cheerfully, "or if he won't I'll be answerable for him. Hadn't you better be off after Jake?"

"That's it," said Old Man admiringly, and immediately sinking all questions as to his own bloodthirsty proclivities. "Seein' as how we've settled matters amikerbly I don't bear no malice. You drop in to-morrow, Parson, an' we'll go on with 'Baptismal Regeneration' an' smoke a pipe over it. Now, boys, scatter for the Bush an' see if you kin git on the trail of that skunk. I'll take the landin' place an' try to plug him if he ain't crossed. Good-night, Parson. It's real chilly, Sally. Your father, bein' an official, couldn't stop for the hangin'. You'd better go home too an' study up on the impertations you ~~are~~ cast on someone as shall be nameless, though, mebbe, cross-eyed or not crossed-eyed, he kin see a good deal further'n you."

Sally nodded a gay good-night to the men as they filed through the narrow doorway of the store. Woman-like, she had not thought of the construction which the Reverend Arthur might put upon her intervention on his behalf. Beneath the ardent glance of his shining eyes her own drooped as he sought to possess himself of her hand and thank her.

"I'm going home," she said abruptly "Don't you know better than to expect me to stay here all night talking to you."

"But, Sally, if you hadn't cared for me," he began.

Sally turned upon him with rising and illogical indignation.

"See here, is this any way to talk? Because I've been unladylike enough to save your life," she said, dropping the

revolver on the ground, regardless of consequences, "you expect me to be in love with you. Men are always so ungrateful, so—so unreasonable." She gave a sniff and began to cry softly.

The Parson picked up the revolver. "That's enough, Sally. I didn't mean to distress you," he said, gently. "Whatever my own fate may be I shall think only of your happiness. Always remember that. Don't you think it would be safer if I took the cartridges out of this revolver?"

Sally began to smile through her tears, the rising ghost of laughter in her eyes. "N-n-no, I d-d-d-don't," she sobbed. "It-it-it wasn't l-l-l-loaded at all, and I w-w-w-w-as afraid they'd f-f-find out I was bluffing them."

Old Man, who had lingered behind the others in the doorway, came forward reproachfully. "It's playin' it low down on a man as has dandled you on his knee to go an' bluff him like that," he said; "but I'll forgive you, Sally, if you take back what you said about my squintin'. I'm thinkin' of marryin' agin an' it might git round. A cross-eyed man don't git no show nowadays, specially with widders."

Sally held out her hand with a rippling burst of laughter good to hear. "I take it all back, you bloodthirsty old monster," she said, merrily; "but if anything happens to him," she looked at the Reverend Arthur, who turned red and white beneath her amused glance, "I'll hold you responsible;" and she fled into the night.

Old Man gazed after her with a sarcastic glance. "Seein' as how she's a woman," he said, "she ain't accountable, Parson, she ain't accountable. If you ain't sleepy you'd better come home with me an—"

But the Reverend Arthur had slipped through the doorway and disappeared. Though a charitable man, even his charity had limits, and he was in no mood to discuss theological points with one who had been clamouring to hang him a few minutes ago.

Old Man looked after him in an injured way. "An' that's the man as I've wrastled with on doctrine till he's able to

floor all them 'Hill' folk! Why, he ain't got no more manners 'n a hog. It's disgustin'; that's what it is, disgustin'! You'd expeck better style from a catfish, an' not be disappointed neither."

He cut himself an ample chaw of tobacco and wandered home through the grim, grey dawn, brushing against the wet branches of the pine as they flung their resinous fragrance in his face. "Thar ain't no fun goin' nowadays," he grumbled, disconsolately. "I was most forgettin' that fellow Jake." His manner brightened, and he hurried down to the landing-place on the chance of getting a pot-shot at that worthy, but in vain. The darkness had mysteriously swallowed up Chilvey Jake. Only once again was he to revisit the Four Corners — only once again; but then his coming would be attended with the majesty and terror of the gaunt king whose name is Death, and who speaks not, neither maketh any sign, but breathes upon us for a little space, until we become as the leaves whirling before the blast, and are blown and driven hither and thither from out of the Land of Life into the Valley of Darkness and Despair, whence Man cometh not until the sound of the Last Trump shall call the sheeted dead from out the tomb.

CHAPTER III.

"A PLAGUE ON BOTH YOUR HOUSES."

PUBLIC opinion began to run very strongly against "The Hill" people when it was rumoured at the Four Corners that, in defiance of all the unwritten laws of the neighbourhood, they had refused to stir one step in aiding the Vigilants to recapture Chilvey Jake, although that worthy was supposed to be in hiding at the parental farm until he could be smuggled safely across the Canadian frontier. The contention of "The Hill" people was that the summary action of the Vigilants had wiped out all moral obligation which they, as a community, might feel to hand over Chilvey Jake for punishment. If the Four Corners folk had chosen to take the law into their own hands, and then fail to carry it out, the matter had come to a legitimate end. Even the question of

compensation to the widowed mother of 'Lijah Fuller could not now be entertained. As a matter of courtesy and good feeling, however, "The Hill" folk were willing to subscribe five hundred dollars. This amount the widowed mother's representatives indignantly refused, with the significant statement that they would raid "The Hill" in a body and "string up" those accomplished ornaments of society, Mr. and Mrs. Jake, senior. A little hanging, they hinted, would soon determine the whereabouts of the cold-blooded murderer who had shot an inoffensive fellow-creature from mere lust of slaughter. The only possible rejoinder to this, was a significant hint from "The Hill" folk that they had laid in an ample store of ammunition, and were quite ready to meet the Four Corners' men half-way. They would prefer, if possible, that the matter should remain over until after their annual dance, as, in the event of an invasion, many influential members of the Ball Committee might be obliged to miss the fun, and, consequently, would feel embittered against their former friends.

The Four Corners' folk were much touched by this appeal to their generosity, and the probability is that the Chilvey Jake episode would have died a natural death had it not been that, in defiance of all precedent and custom, after the Four Corners' folk had undertaken not to molest "The Hill" people on the night of their ball, the usual invitations requesting the presence of the leading people of the Four Corners were not forthcoming. As the ball at "The Hill" had been talked of for months, this was a slight which could not be passed over in silence. The affront was too gross, too offensive, and was taken to mean an unmistakable desire on the part of "The Hill" folk for a separation of all those pleasant bonds of friendship which, in spite of occasional difficulties, had so long subsisted between the two towns, even to getting their supply of whisky from the same sources. It was not as if the difference had arisen from a worthy cause. The slaying of an insignificant youth, when life was so lightly esteemed, could scarcely be accounted an adequate

reason for the discontinuance of social courtesies. To add to the bitterness of the whole affair, a rumour went round that Sally Wrong had been seen walking with Pete Harrison, one of the leading spirits of "The Hill" Ballroom Committee. That Pete should have dared to show himself near the Four Corners at all during a crisis of this nature argued an incredible recklessness. The Four Corners' folk had made up their minds that as Sally had saved the minister from hanging, it would be a very mean thing on her part not to marry him and cause the diminutive cleric to wish that Lynch Law had been permitted to run its course. Under the circumstances, it was felt that the matter was one calling for public intervention. Either Pete Harrison should be shot or the parson must marry Sally. Public intervention, however, in the form of a representative mingling of age and wisdom as a deputation to approach Constable Wrong on the subject, was met by Miss Sally herself, and routed with ignominy.

"If you're so upset at not being asked to 'The Hill' dance as to want to lead me one with the Parson," that perverse but beautiful being remarked, with her customary vigour and a suspicion of heightened colour in her fair cheeks, "you'd better give one, too; it is time you did something to prove yourselves men instead of idiots who want to lynch innocent people. No wonder 'The Hill' boys wouldn't have any of you on the premises."

At this unnatural, unpatriotic, and uncalled-for rebuke, Old Man turned on his heel, accompanied by Ikey, who was only too glad to get away, and went straight off to the Sheriff. "Sheriff, we've got to give a dance," he said, "or the women'll talk our lives out. For the sake of peace an' quietness come to the meetin' to-night an' we'll settle the pesky thing right away. If you wants to be popular you've got to git the bulge on them 'Hill' sellers somehow, so this is the way to do it. The women'll make all the men do what you want if you git up a dance. They're like colts. As long as they kin fling their heels about

they're all right ; when they can't, they git into mischief." Then he went to Sally, and told her, with much Machiavellian wisdom, that he alone had persuaded the Sheriff to promise that there should be a dance.

Miss Sally Wrong was delighted to think that her proposal was thus likely to be put on a practical footing. After one or two preliminary gatherings, the Committee of Inspection met at Miller's Store in order to report progress. They had never given a dance before and, consequently, were untrammelled by the degrading conventionalities of an effete and necessarily feeble civilisation. Little Constable Wrong (he was also Post-Master and Cobbler at the Four Corners), in consideration of his ardent devotion to literature, had been appointed secretary of the Ball Committee, and was inclined to "put on frills," over the others, who were less versed in the turning of a phrase, and whose knowledge of letters was confined to a somewhat intermittent perusal of the *Four Corners Gazette*, when the editor of that enterprising journal "spread himself" in his endeavour to do justice to a more than usually interesting shooting incident or picturesque inquest.

The Sheriff took the chair by virtue of his official position and leg-of-mutton fist. Both were considered equally crushing in the settlement of disputed questions, for he had received his appointment direct from Ottawa and was "no slouch." Miller, the owner of the largest store, was also a member of the Committee. His share of the work consisted in sitting on a nail-keg and making quizzical objections to Ikey Marston's somewhat impracticable schemes for ball-room decoration, wherein pine boughs and red calico played equally prominent yet incongruous parts. Old Man reclined next to the whisky jug, and dispensed its contents with solemn impartiality, somewhat indistinctly expressing his desire to know "When this yer fun'r al procession's goin' to git in its work."

The soft moonlight filtering through the dusty windows of the store cast exaggerated shadows on the walls behind

the Committee, producing a distorted silhouette of the Sheriff's big head and long black curls. He was the only man who had laid aside his hat. The costume of most of the others consisted of blue flannel shirts, buckskin trousers, and greased top-boots, into which the ends of their pants were rakishly tucked. Some wore one suspender, others two ; but it was considered a matter for local option, and no one presumed to dictate to his neighbour, with or without firearms, on such a delicate point. Revolvers were carried in two fashions. The younger school preferred them negligently thrust into a flaming sash ; the "old-timers," less ostentatious, but equally ready "to draw," with or without the slightest provocation, jammed their revolvers into the right hip pocket of the trousers and balanced them with a quart bottle of whisky in the left pocket, thus enabling themselves when they had shot anyone, to comfort the victim's last moments with a pull at the inspiring beverage known as "tanglefoot."

Having due regard to its official position, the Committee had adjourned from the store to an upper room chastely furnished with pitch-pine tables and a few wooden stools. Tobacco, in the plug, was arranged at one end of the largest table ; cigars, for the Sheriff, lay in a box before that functionary's chair ; and spittoons, for everybody, were ranged about the sanded floor in convenient contiguity to such experts as Ikey Marston and Old Man Evans. In spite of all this luxury, however, the countenances of the Committee wore a very serious expression. To quote Ikey Marston's significant phrase, they "had tackled a big contract and didn't know which end they was comin' out."

Constable Wrong neatly arranged the dirty old blotting-pad before him, and coughed importantly as he flipped a fly out of the ink-pot. The fly alighted on Old Man's head. As it wandered up and down, tracing an impromptu map on his (Old Man's) cranium, it inspired the embarrassed orator with an idea for his opening phrase. "The Committee's a-goin' to wade in," he announced, with a baldness of diction which was felt

to be signally unworthy of the occasion. "The Committee's a-goin' to wade in."

Old Man could not conceal his disappointment as he carefully replaced the fly on the table without hurting it.

"I allers did say Constable Wrong had about as strong a hold on style as he has on his prisoners," he murmured. "When we're goin' in to knock out them 'Hill' chaps' dance, thar did ought to be more tone about the proceedins. This ain't no way to open it at all, this ain't."

featherin'. I'm gittin' that mournful I'll have to be helped home."

Thus pathetically adjured, Ikey struggled to his feet; a little, wizened old man, with strong, comical features, and one finger missing from his left hand.

"Gentlemen," he said, quietly, "in response to the request of my honourable friend from the Crick, I have much pleasure in declarin' this yer meetin' to be opened for the discussion of an important question—the question, gentle-



"I'VE MUCH PLEASURE IN DECLARIN' THIS YER MEETIN' OPEN"

The Sheriff hastily interposed. "The meetin' is now formally opened," he said, with a thump of his big fist on the table. "The Secretary will proceed to take the depositions—" He turned red, and realised that the force of habit had been too much for him.

"Seems to think he's got us all up for sellin' whisky," muttered Ikey Marston, sarcastically.

"Sling a little fun into it, Ikey," pathetically entreated Old Man. "Sling a little fun into it, or I'll bust. Talk to 'em same as if it was a cheerful tar an'

men, whether we're to allow them jay-birds from 'The Hill' to crow over us" ("Jay-birds don't crow," from Old Man) "an' put on frills because they've had the all-fired impudence to give a party an' leave us out. We, too, gentlemen, are goin' to extend our elegant horspitalities to our immediate neighbours; we, too, are goin' to give a hop, but it ain't goin' to be a or'ney one-horse affair like them 'Hill' chaps; it ain't goin' to be a fiddler-stuck-up-on-a-bar'l arrangement with taller candles on the walls an' down yer backs, 'Heaven-bless-our-home' texts

on the walls, an' a keg of whisky at the door. No, gentlemen, nuthin' of the sort. The hayleet——"

"The what?" asked Constable Wrong, resenting his enforced deposition.

"The hayleet—French!—of the Four Corners will be invited to the revels," continued the orator, warming to his work. "A brass band will be hired for the occasion, an' a deputation of our leading citizens will receive the guests at the Institoot. A rekerkey—French agin—sup——"

Constable Wrong got up.

"I ain't a-goin' to stay here to be sworn at," he growled.

"Don't you interrupt the purceedins'," said Old Man, with a tender and beignant smile, "or I'll drill a hole in yer. We ain't had no fun since last election, an' when a man gits on his legs as can speak, you dodderin' old hammer-tappin' disgrace to the Law, yer wants to spile the fun. Sit down."

"A rekerkey supper will be provided," continued Ikey, "an' the merriment will continue till daybreak doth appear, providin' them 'Hill' folk don't come down an' do likewise."

"That's so," said Old Man, approvingly. "I've got a new Derringer I ain't tried yet. I'll bring it along."

"Shet up with your Derringer," said Ikey, sitting down again. "What's the next point for the meetin' to consider?"

The Sheriff coughed nervously.

"It's been sorter hinted," he said, "as how the Committee did ought to sling on a little city style an' come in claw-hammers. I've been told as four of them 'Hill' sellers had white ties as well at their hop; the rest wore plain red an' yaller."

"You don't catch me a tryin' any such onnecesary foolishness," said Old Man, resolutely. "I wouldn't mind wearin' a biled shirt for once though," he added, with the air of a man making a generous concession to sentiment. "I could peel it off if need be an' fight in my skin; but I don't take no stock in claw-hammers. Maybe you was thinkin' of puttin' me into white gloves with black stripes on 'em?"

"It's the right sort of thing," interposed Constable Wrong.

"An' black briches, an' shiny shoes like a Frenchman's?" gently continued Old Man. "An' p'raps you was allowin' I'd scent myself up like a possum an' leave my pipe at home? Why, darn you all," with gathering fierceness of manner, but still speaking quietly, "if it came to a fight in that rig-out I'd be bowled over afore I could draw."

Ikey knew his victim.

"Old Man bein' a kind of patriarch," he said, "an' bein' representative of our ontrammelled freedom, so to speak, we might let him off the clawhammer an' biled shirt, but if he ain't goin' to sport black briches I'll just clar out altogether."

Old Man was mollified.

"If that's the general ultramatum," he said appeasedly, "I'll turn out in the briches I've had for fun'rals this twenty year. I disremember 'zactly, but the last time I wore them briches was when Scotty Jones planted the Mounseer an' give a supper to the widow arterwards. Somehow, they split that night—the briches—an' ain't altogether reliable, but I'll do my best with 'em."

A spirit of universal harmony prevailing, other details were quickly settled. The ball was to be given in "The Institute," a fact which revived Old Man's drooping spirits considerably, for he had once assisted in trying a horse-thief there. He recalled the circumstances connected with "the hangin'" in a manner which won the unqualified disapproval of Constable Wrong and the Sheriff, both of whom had recently been appointed by the Canadian Government with a view to the repression of the lawless originality of Four Corners' folk. Hitherto, the Four Corners people had got on very well without outside assistance in managing their affairs. They were willing, however, to give the Sheriff and judge and other somewhat superfluous functionaries a trial, but inwardly resolved to revert to their own somewhat primitive methods in the event of emergencies with which, from its lack of intimate knowledge of provincial etiquette, the law might not be in a position to cope. The Sheriff, conscious of the insecurity of his position, assumed the tone of an old inhabitant

and endeavoured to impose upon such shrewd observers as Ikey Marston and Old Man Evans, who, in their turn, went serenely on their wonted ways, ostensibly raising stock, but in reality doing as little as possible. Their farms were worked on "half shares" with enterprising *habitants* from Quebec, who were gradually awaking to the fact that in spite of its six months snow, the Ottawa Valley is one of the most fertile districts in the world. Communication was kept open with other places by means of sleighs in winter and the Ottawa boat in summer. As a rule, Four Corners' folk looked somewhat coldly on outsiders, except those worn-out children of civilisation who had over-eaten themselves in New York and came every summer to "The Springs" Hotel, some five miles away, to be cured.

As the members of the Committee went upon their various ways, it was noticed that they all wore the elated air of men equal to the occasion. There had been a general feeling in the air for some time past that life at the Four Corners was becoming monotonously level and uneventful. Both Old Man and Ikey clearly foresaw trouble ahead, but joyed in the prospect. Their early days had been passed in such stirring escapades that they were extremely reluctant to settle down to the unwelcome repose of inglorious age. For once in their lives they shook hands with marked effusion as they parted, Old Man to see to the repairs necessitated by the ragged condition of his "fun'ral pants," Ikey to meditate upon the possibility of arraying his bent and spare form in the incongruous garments of society.

CHAPTER IV. THE DEFIANCE.

THERE was a general sense of exhilaration in the village on its becoming known that the Committee had decided to give a dance. When the news reached "The Hill," it was received with mingled incredulity and surprise. The young men particularly experienced an acrid bitterness as they reflected that Sally Wrong, the belle for twenty miles round, was sure to be there in all the splendour

of attire due to such an occasion, and that the louts of the Four Corners would monopolise her winning smiles. They cursed the unwisdom of their elders in taking such a step as the studied ignoring of the Four Corners' folk. The further reflection that the original cause of all this trouble was not worth powder and shot, only intensified their bitterness. Had it not been for the keeping up of appearances, they would have sought out Chilvey Jake and suspended him from the nearest tree; but they had gone too far to retreat, and must now put up with the consequences of their action, however unpleasant. Indeed, Pete Harrison, the most prominent of the younger men, who was more than suspected of a strong liking for Sally Wrong, relieved his angry feelings by seeking out Chilvey Jake (the heroic cowboy hid by day, and only came out at night), and giving him the soundest thrashing that worthy had ever known, although it afterwards appeared his experience in this direction was not at all limited. Having thus partially worked off the gloom engendered by the situation, Pete Harrison began to revive, and summoned a meeting of "The Hill" people, in order to bring matters to a head, and either wipe out the Four Corners' folk, or bridge the affair over in some way which would let down the pride of his elders easily, and not allow the men of the Four Corners an open triumph.

When Constable Wrong sent out the invitations to the *élite* of Four Corners' society some days later, it was felt that no expense had been spared by the Committee, for they were on blue paper enclosed in envelopes of a chaste pink. Threatening rumours from "The Hill" reached the Committee every day; and Sally Wrong, who had purchased a silk dress which rivalled the envelopes in hue, confided to her bosom friend, Irene Spinks, that if those "Hill" fellows hadn't the pluck to come down to the dance, she would never speak to any of them again.

"Of course, you mean Pete Harrison," said Irene, with a toss of her head. "For my part, if a man couldn't come and take me away I'd give him up."

Sally Wrong looked significantly at the picturesquely freckled features of her friend. "Of course, dear," she said, sweetly, "you must remember that it would require a good deal of courage to take you away from anywhere."

"I don't mind," said Irene disdainfully. "You can be horrid and cross if you like, but I mean what I say. It's all very well to pretend you don't love him, but I wasn't going through the Crick pastures the other evening for nothing."

Sally seized the freckled Irene in a strong grasp. Her eyes sparkled. She breathed with little quick jerks.

"Was he there, Irene, you darling, darling girl? Was Pete there? And I never knew it. Why didn't you tell me?"

"Oh, Pete couldn't stay, or your father'd be practising on him with his six-shooter. He said he didn't mind it, but somebody's cow'd be sure to get hurt, and your father would have trouble with the neighbours."

Sally scorned to defend her father's marksmanship.

"I was real mean to you just now, Irene," she said; "but I hadn't heard from Pete for so long I'd begun to think he—he—"

"And he hadn't heard from you for

so long he'd begun to think you'd—," said Irene, significantly.

"Well, I hadn't," returned Sally.

"And he hadn't," said Irene.

"I wish he'd come to-night," said Sally. "I'd risk father's catching us, or shooting us either."

Irene began to smile.

"Some folk might stroll out this evening—folks without freckles, of course—

to the bit of Bush at the end of the Crick," she said, "just to see how the cows are getting on."

There was so much meaning in this otherwise innocent remark, that Sally's blue eyes lit up with a gleam of hope. She danced round the room pulling Irene after her.

"When—when?" she whispered breathlessly. "Irene, you're a freckled angel."

"To-night," said Irene, as soon as she recovered her breath. "It's the first time

I ever heard of an angel wearing freckles." She looked seriously at the beautiful girl before her. "Sally, you ought to give him up; there'll be a lot of bloodshed if you don't."

"I—can't—give—him—up," said Sally with angry emphasis. "I've tried over and over again, and I can't do it. D'you suppose I don't know what it means? Father'd shoot us on sight if he caught



"IT DOES TICKLE SO"

us. He's puffed up with pride since he got out those absurd invitations."

"Well, your father doesn't know, anyway," said Irene reassuringly. "If you feel like that you're bound to go on with it."

"You talk to father presently while I slip away," said Sally miserably. "He's sorting the mail now; I'll pop out at the back."

Irene went into the shop, where Constable Wrong was busily engaged distributing the mail to Hiram Beaune, the blacksmith, and a black barber from Hawkinsville. As soon as Irene began to talk to the old man, Sally flung a white scarf coquettishly over her golden hair and ran swiftly up the hill through the dewy night towards the black patch of Bush at the extreme end of the pasture. She was a good runner, and speedily crossed the intervening velvety space. The fallen needles of the pines made an odorous carpet for her noiseless feet; uncanny night-birds brushed by her when she entered the Bush; and an indignant ground-hog grunted a frightened protest as Sally nearly trod upon him, but saved herself by a quick leap to one side, only to be clasped in a pair of strong arms.

There was silence after Sally's little terrified shriek. Presently a coquettish voice made itself heard, but very softly: "Stop fooling, Pete. You mustn't. Besides, it does tickle so."

"I reckon other girls don't—" began Pete, then guiltily pulled himself short, for Sally had bounded to the opposite side of the path like a frightened deer. "I'm going home again," she announced, with swift decision, "if you've nothing better to say to *me* than what other girls think of that scrubbing-brush on your lip."

She was away like an arrow before the discomfited Pete could recover his self-possession. Unfortunately, her slipper came off, and he caught her. "Quit foolin', Sally," he said, trying to see her lovely face in the dusk. "I was only sayin' it on purpose. D'you think," with intense and dramatic scorn—"D'you think I'd kiss any other girl in the world than you, let alone a 'Hill' girl! Why,

it would be going back to skim milk after wallowin' in cream."

Sally suffered herself to be appeased, as they emerged into a little glade, and tried to discern each other's faces. "I wish you were coming to the dance, Pete," she said. "It will be slow without you."

"I *am* comin'," said Pete, with emphasis.

"You'll get shot if you do."

"Well, aren't you worth bein' shot for?" enquired Pete.

He felt the soft, warm radiance of the girl's regard penetrate through the dusk. "Aren't I better worth living for?"

Pete's answer was emphatic, and to the point, without evoking any further contemptuous references to the quality of his moustache. "I've sworn I'd come to the dance," he said obstinately. "If I don't, I daren't show myself again at 'The Hill.' It's time this yer blood-feud business came to an end some way or other. I got our 'Hill' Committee to write a letter to the Four Corners' folk givin' 'em a chance to invite us down and settle the whole business, but that pig-headed, pesky old father of yours wrote back they'd expect to see us when a Four Corners' girl married a 'Hill' man, and not afore."

"And what did you say?" asked Sally.

"Here's the answer," said Pete, producing a missive from his pocket. "No one dared bring it down 'cept me. I can't see to read it, an' I mustn't strike a light, but I know it by heart."

"Tell me," said Sally, creeping near him with a little thrill of trembling enjoyment.

"It's a bit vigorous," said Pete. "No callin' fancy names, but real polite an' high-toned."

"So much the better."

"The Committee of the 'Hill' folk presents its compliments to the Committee of the Four Corners Dance, as a matter of form, an' then wades into business. The 'Hill' Committee don't care a shuck for the Four Corners Committee, but it's goin' to be represented at the dance by one of its members, and that member will sacrifice himself an' marry a Four Corners' girl ("That's just bluff,

you know. Thar ain't no sacrifice about it," Pete broke off, re-assuringly) however painful such a purseedin' may be. The 'Hill' Committee puts up five hundred dollars an' defies the Four Corners' Committee to cover it. That's all," said Pete. "I'm goin' to creep up to the village when you're all asleep an' shove it into the letter-box."

"But how can you do it?" asked Sally, anxiously. "They'll have an armed crowd at the door an' shoot you on sight."

"I lowed I'd tackle this yer contract myself," said Pete. "We were goin' to draw lots, but I knew they hadn't a chance of winnin', 'cept, maybe, one of 'em tried Irene Spinks. I'm blessed," he added, dolefully, "if I know how I'm goin' to do it onless——"

He whispered something into Sally's rosy ear, which made it turn a deeper pink as the first faint stars began to peep over the tops of the pines, and the frogs in the creek croaked musically to their smaller brethren on land.

"Sal-ly, Sal-ly, I can't find the old brindled cow," cried the harsh voice of Constable Wrong.

Pete drew back into the shadow, after pressing another kiss upon Sally's pretty lips.

"No wonder you can't find the brindled cow," he said, indignantly shaking his fist at the old man. "You've a face on you enough to stop a clock, let alone scarin' a brindled cow."

"Was you alone, Sally?" asked the old man suspiciously, as the girl hurriedly joined him. "Don't you go for to deceive an officer of the law. I thought as I heard voices."

"Fire into the Bush and see," said Sally, jokingly.

Pete took the hint and slipped behind the trunk of a pine as a bullet whistled by.

"I'm pretty quick with a shootin' iron," he heard the old man say in answer to Sally's shriek. "What are you skeared about, Sally?"

"I believe you've shot the brindled cow," said Sally, with an outburst of rippling laughter. "I thought I heard a groan." She knew that Pete had been quick enough to catch her meaning and

get under shelter from the erratic firing of her sire. Besides, it was the only way of dispelling the old man's suspicions.

"Wall, wall," Constable Wrong grumbled, "I did try to hit her one day, but couldn't. She was that pesky aggravatin', runnin' me all over the pasture, I'd made up my mind to turn her into beef. But 'twarnt no use; she was too spry. I'll look round for her in the mornin'. If I have hit her, it'll save considerable trouble. She's allers leadin' t'others off into the Bush."

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself, dad," Pete heard Sally say as they went slowly across the pasture.

He put his hand up to his cheek. It was wet with blood, for the old man's bullet, by some strange chance, had just grazed it. Pete's language was unfit for repetition. When he had somewhat exhausted the comminatory rigour of the remarks addressed to Constable Wrong's retiring form he brought up his mare, sat down on a tree-stump, lit a pipe, and waited.

A few more stars began to twinkle through the topmost branches of the pines. There was that curious rustling and pattering of tiny feet in the bushes occasioned by beasts which only come out at dusk to seek for food and to whom gloom is more welcome than light. Though he was securely hidden in the dense undergrowth which surrounded the stump, the young man could still see the village at his feet. Beyond it, the silvery flood danced on its winding way to the falls, the hoarse murmuring of which, softened by the distance, fell soothingly on his ear. Again, beyond the river, the Laurentian Hills rose to the sky line, their sombre, fir-clad summits stretching dark branches to the stars. Here and there, the moonlit surface of the river was darkened with long strings of rafts on which *voyageurs* ate their evening meal, and sang the old songs to which they have been accustomed from time immemorial. Myriad fire-flies flitted about on the outskirts of the Bush, alternately revealing and hiding tiny lamps as they opened and shut their wings. In the village

itself, a hundred lights twinkled; men lounged carelessly about doorways or stood in groups discussing the events of the day; and in the parson's garden, Pete Harrison could dimly see a sad little figure leaning over the rails as if listening to the boom-boom of bull frogs in the neighbouring marsh.

It seemed to Pete that the shriller-voiced frogs in the Creek also lent their quota of mockery as the dejected clergyman picked up a large stone and angrily flung it into the adjoining pool, only to realise the futility of any efforts on his part to silence these imaginary tormentors.

"I don't see what he's got to be so darned miserable about," thought Pete, comfortably puffing at his pipe as he surveyed the forlorn little figure down below. "She's done more for him than most girls would. You might as well expect a dove to mate with an eagle as for Sally to marry that poor little chap. Not but what he's got pluck," he added, with the judicial impartiality of a favoured suitor who can afford to despise a rival's claims.

But, after a time, as the blue-grey darkness deepened, and the forlorn figure down below still stayed motion-

less, Pete's commiseration changed to contempt.

"I'd take it fightin'," he declared, "and not go grumpin' about like that. Wish he'd be off to bed; I don't want to stop here all night, an' have the sellers jeer at me when I git back because I ain't got the pluck to deliver this yer letter."

He took the letter out of his pocket and weighed it in one hand, as if deliberating on the consequences such a firebrand flung into the middle of the peaceful little village was likely to produce.

When he looked up again, the distant banging of a door was borne faintly upon his ear. The Rev. Arthur, tired of his meditations in the dewy night, had gone to bed.

Pete rose up, put out his pipe, shook off the dew, stretched himself with a yawn, and prepared for action. One by one the people in the street went indoors, and extinguished their lamps. The only light which continued to shine came from the little window of the Rev. Arthur's bedroom.

"It don't matter about him," said the young man, somewhat contemptuously, as he tightened the mare's girths, and led her cautiously from the bush. "Whoa, you



"PETE GAVE A WHOOP OF DEFiance"

pesky critter; if you go an' bark your shins agin a stump I sha'n't be able to put any style into this yer business."

The mare nuzzled her velvet nose against his shoulder, as if promising not to commit any feminine indiscretion which might compromise her master, and the two came cautiously out into the path which led to the village. Then the young man hastily mounted, rode swiftly up to the post-office, dropped the letter into the box, hammered loudly at the post-office door, backed some ten yards out into the road, and gave a whoop of defiance which brought Constable Wrong to the window, frantic with rage.

"Who the blazes are you as disturbs a representative officer at this yer time of night?" he demanded, rubbing his dazed eyes, and peering through the moonlight at the black masses of shadow on the other side of the way, in a vain attempt to discover the irreverent batterer of his door.

"It's only me, Constable Wrong," shouted the young man in gay defiance. "I'm Pete Harrison; I've brought the Four Corners' coons a message from 'The Hill.'"

There was a sudden outburst of very illegal language from the window — language entirely unworthy of a village constable. Overcome by the mingled haze occasioned by the old man's hurried discharge of his gun and the wordy storm with which he accompanied his shot, the young man put spurs to the mare and galloped up the street, waving his hat with a ringing shout which brought a dropping fire after him, as half-clad people rushed to their windows and discharged any weapon which came handy at this reckless intruder on their domestic privacy.

But the mare's elastic stride carried her daring rider safely through the village. On, on she sped, spurning the velvet turf beneath her feet, steering cleverly between the overhanging branches of the pines, and galloping as if intoxicated with the pungent odours of the night. Thanks to her instinct, the reckless Pete emerged into the moonlight at the bottom of "The Hill" unhurt, every nerve tingling with the wild excitement of his mad midnight ride. He

had seen Sally; he had got even with her fatuous sire for his nearly fatal aim; and had achieved a dare-devil reputation in a single night. What more could the spirit of mortal desire? Small wonder then that he took from his breast a bow of ribbon which he had stolen from Sally's lovely hair and pressed it to his lips with all the fervour of an amorous enthusiast who is certain of success. Then he dismounted, flung his arm round the mare's neck, and the two lovingly walked up the hill in the moonlight to where the assembled wiseacres of the community were waiting to learn the success of their mission.

CHAPTER V.

AN UNEXPECTED ENCOUNTER.

BUT this feeling of intoxicated pride did not endure for any length of time, and once again Pete Harrison was in a very discontented mood. Moved thereunto by his past success, grown foolhardy and vain-glorious, a few days later he again essayed to meet Sally in the Bush. Unknown to herself, that young lady's light feet were persistently dogged by Old Man, who solaced himself for the indignities inflicted on the Four Corners folk by a long shot at the top of Pete's hat as it appeared above the undergrowth. This unpleasant reminder that he was but mortal, somewhat damped the exuberance of Pete's youthful spirits, and he remained hanging about the precincts of the village all night in the vain hope of seeing Sally, who was far too wary to give Old Man a second chance of killing her lover. Indeed, she shrewdly surmised that the shot was meant as a warning, for Old Man was a notoriously skilled marksman, and could drill holes in various minute objects at a fabulous number of paces, whenever he was minded to give an exhibition of his skill.

After this conclusive exhibition of his prowess, Old Man retired chuckling to Ikey's shanty. "Guess that'll scare him away for a bit," he murmured. "I'd ruther not drill a hole in such a chipper young fellow unless necessity compels; at the same time, them 'Hill' men is givin' 'emselves airs; they're



"NODDED SAUCILY AND CONTINUED HER WAY"

puttin' on too many frills altogether: it's about time we got the matter settled up somehow."

Sally's dreams had not been of the pleasantest description. She was haunted by the horrid vision of her lover as he appeared at the foot of the bed, pale and wounded, and reproached her for luring him to destruction. To escape the gloom engendered by this unpleasant vision, she rose up as the dull grey of dawn brightened into pink, and the sun shone gloriously over the rolling river in all the majesty of crimson and gold. It was but the work of a few minutes to steal past the chamber of her sleeping sire, whose profound snores filled her with affright. As Sally went by she peeped into his room, and found a whole arsenal of deadly weapons conveniently arranged for immediate use in the event of any sudden emergency.

"Dad always was thoughtful,"- she mused, unbarring the door and slipping noiselessly into the little patch of garden which communicated with the pasture at the back of the house. "I'll just row up

to the Point and have a square think over what's to be done with Pete. He's only made matters worse with his boyish nonsense. He can't continue to hang about here. I wonder whose boat I'd better take."

Sally carefully selected the nicest boat out of the three or four moored to the landing-place and stepped in.

"It looks like the Reverend Arthur's," she said, fitting a cushion, which she had taken the precaution to bring with her, comfortably on the seat. "These oars are just right for me. I wonder he isn't ashamed to be seen using such toys."

With vigorous strokes she rowed out into the stream, entirely unconscious that her clerical admirer had caught sight of her from his window, and was hurrying down, filled with delight at the prospect of so unexpected a *tête-à-tête* when all the world was fresh and fair. He sped blithely down to the landing-stage, only to find the wilful maid pulling with all her might in the direction of the Point.

"Good morning," he cried, and waved his hand, but she only nodded saucily and continued her way.

"I'm going to the Point," she shouted to him. "See who can get there first."

Sally was under the impression that the Parson would resent this cavalier treatment and turn back again; but the beauty of the morn, the sight of Sally's lovely hair blown about her and amorously kissed by every passing wind, filled him with delight. He quickened his steps, conscious of the *détour* he would have to make, as Sally shot still further out into the stream with a nod of gay defiance.

Thus it was that Pete, looking cautiously through the Bush, perceived his sweetheart on the best of terms with a rival, who was nodding and smiling back as his little legs involuntarily broke into a trot and he headed for the Point with the evident intention of intercepting her. A jealous pang shot through the young man, and his upper lip curled grimly. "She thinks I've gone home," he muttered, "an' is carryin' on with that feller. A parson, too!" His under lip stuck out as if words failed to express sufficient disgust. Then he started off in order to be first on the scene, and timed his arrival so well, that when Sally reached the sandy shore of the Point, he

was hidden safely under a fallen log where he could overhear all that took place. "I'll have it out once an' for all with this feller," he muttered, feeling savage, and hungry, and limp after his unpleasant night in the Bush. "It's pretty rough on a man when he's gone through all this for a girl to find she's carryin' on with someone else jest for fun. My, but I'm darned hungry!"

But when pretty Sally stepped daintily ashore, flushed with the exercise of rowing against the stream, his heart strangely softened towards her, and he involun-



"THEN SHE CAME DOWN FROM THE LOG"

tarily ceased to wonder at the Reverend Arthur's infatuation for this rose of the wilderness, so surpassingly fair that all men's love went forth to meet her half-way, and even a bobolink, swinging on a bending bough at the water's edge, refrained from flight until the Parson's joyous footstep broke the spell.

"Have you come to arrest me for stealing your boat?" she asked, coquettishly, making room for him beside her on a log, one end of which still swayed gently to and fro with the motion of the river, as if longing to fling itself into the falls and flee to the open sea.

Instead of sitting down beside her, the Reverend Arthur stood nervously digging one heel into the sand. "It was foolish of me to follow you," he said. "It would be far better for me if I went away altogether."

"Why?" she asked, with a radiant affectation of not knowing his meaning. "Why? Are we such a set of savages that you want to go back to your English friends? Don't you get enough excitement here? I should have thought, after the other evening, you would find England extremely slow."

"I have been trying to think it out," he said. "If I went back to England, you might need a protector, and I should not be here." He reared himself proudly up to his full height of five feet four, until he towered above her.

The girl laughed.

"Isn't it the other way round?" she asked, somewhat cruelly. "Don't you know that I'm very angry with you for all that foolishness of the other night?"

"Why was it foolish?"

"You paid me but a poor compliment to think that I cared one straw what became of a man like that."

"But how was I to know? You went about with him."

"Simply because I didn't wish him to murder any of my friends. I am very angry with you for your foolish interference. I should have thought that you didn't want to throw away your life when—" She hesitated.

He sat down beside her on the log as it dipped still lower in the water, and Pete groaned. This was pretty Sally's

way. Nothing else would content her than that every man should bow down and worship her charms, even though she did not want to marry him. Admiration was food and light and air to this rustic coquette.

"Didn't you hear a noise in the bushes?" asked Sally, jumping on the log and gathering up her skirts preparatory to flight. "I hate things crawling about one—don't you? They make my flesh creep."

The Rev. Arthur gently reassured her. Then she came down from the top of the log.

"You're sure there aren't any spiders and things about?"

The Rev. Arthur was not sure. It took so long to assuage her pretended fears that Pete groaned again.

"I'm sure I heard something," said Sally; "it must be a poor wounded animal dying in the scrub there."

"Thar'll be more'n a wounded animal soon, if she doesn't look out," muttered Pete. "I'll take that little Parson by the scruff of the neck an' pitch him into the river, if he ain't careful."

The Parson proudly produced a brand-new revolver, beautifully polished, and pointed it in the direction of the log.

"It seems to be behind there," he said. "If the poor thing groans again I'll fire and put it out of its pain."

Pete gave an involuntary wriggle at the prospect, but did not venture to groan any more.

"That dum fool might hit me," he muttered breathlessly; "an' I wouldn't be a bit surprised if he did it on purpose."

The Reverend Arthur began to speak very fast, without any of the nervous little pauses which usually impeded his utterance.

"If you will be my wife and come back to England with me, Sally," he pleaded, "you shall have every luxury you can desire, the gratification of every whim the instant it suggests itself to you. You're not meant for this wild life. It will harden and spoil your beauty. In time you will grow like the people about you. No one can escape the force of association."

The backwoods coquette looked at him from beneath her eyelids with quiet scorn.

"I would rather become like them than be taken for a savage by your people," she said. "I always wondered why you came among us if you despise us so. You had better go back or, if people know what you think of us, I may not be able to protect you."

He was stung by her anger.

"I will not go back until you love me."

"In that case you will stay here forever," she said.

There was a trace of pity in Sally's voice. She was ashamed of herself for having led him on, and she also wondered what would be Pete's view of the situation could he see her that moment. But she looked up at the Parson with feminine coquetry, as if reluctant to let him go, and, encouraged by her glance, he bent over and kissed her, still keeping his revolver pointed in the direction of the log.

Pete groaned again.

"I really must put that poor animal out of its pain," said the Rev. Arthur, approaching the log with determined footsteps. "I can't say a word without its punctuating my remarks with groans of the hollowest description."

Suddenly a curly head thrust itself up over the log. "Fire away an' be hanged to you," cried Pete. "I've had enough of this."

Sally did not shriek this time. She never did when real danger was nigh. "I'm ashamed of you," she said stiffly to Pete, "spying on my actions like this! Go home to 'The Hill,' and stop there! It's all you're fit for."

Pete stepped grimly over the log, though still covered by the Parson's hesitating revolver.

"Stay where you are," said the Parson firmly. "If you move another step towards this lady, I shall really be compelled to fire."

Pete's angry astonishment flushed his countenance ruddy red. "Well, I'm d—d," was all he could say, though he looked a great deal more.

"Not yet, but there is every probability you will be if you continue to indulge in

such language," said the Parson firmly. "You will either apologise for your rudeness, or I shall feel it my duty to hand you over to the village authorities, to be dealt with by them for making a disturbance the other evening."

Sally strove to interfere, but the Rev. Arthur waved her back. "One moment if you please, Miss Wrong. May I ask who is this person? I know him by sight, but not by name."

Pete glanced imploringly at Sally. Piqued though she felt at her own indiscretion, that blithsome coquette was in no mood to betray her lover. "Stop this nonsense, and let him go," she said angrily to the Rev. Arthur.

"Pardon me if I enquire what relation this—er—this gentleman is to you?" asked the Rev. Arthur, quietly, "and what right he has to follow you about in this—in this pre-eminently backwoods manner?"

"I am engaged to him," said Sally, quietly, although inwardly conscience-stricken.

The Rev. Arthur flinched not, neither did he lower his weapon.

"I really do not know what hinders me from blowing out your brains," was his somewhat unexpected remark to Pete. "If I were not a clergyman, I feel quite sure that I should do so."

"If you hadn't got the drop on me I'd soon answer that question," retorted Pete.

"One moment," said the Rev. Arthur blandly. "I understand, pardon me if I am in error, that the customary method of settling disputes in this country between gentlemen—Nature's gentlemen I mean—is by means of the revolver?"

"That's about right," said Pete, surlily.

"I think we had better adopt the same plan," said the Rev. Arthur, speaking with what novelists call "reserved force."

"Why?" enquired Pete, greatly relieved to find that he was not to be slaughtered off-hand, but marvelling that a clergyman should speak in this militant manner. "Why?"

The little minister struggled to preserve his calm, but in vain.

"You ask me why," he cried, passionately. "You ask me why! I will tell

you the reason. You have stolen from me the woman I love, and I will either win her back or die here." He lowered his pistol as he spoke, and bowed to Pete with grave courtesy. "Miss Wrong will give the signal. I should think about ten yards would be the proper interval. I am not versed in these matters, but that is the distance I have noticed my friend Mr. Evans generally practices at. I have tried the same with my garden fence and not infrequently contrived to hit it."

Pete glanced irresolutely at the little clergyman, whose face was curiously composed and calm now that his gust of passion was over.

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself?" he asked.

"No," said the little clergyman, simply; "I'm not. But that is a question for me to settle with my own conscience afterwards."

"Oh, very well," said Pete, huffily, for he was very hungry, and cold, and stiff, and the events of the morning were beginning to tell upon his impulsive temper. "Oh, very well. I'm a dead shot, an' in no mood for foolin'."

Sally stood looking on. The whole affair seemed too ridiculous to be true. She was aroused from her amused contemplation of the would-be belligerents by noticing the little clergyman as he paced out the distance and marked the limit with his handkerchief.

"If you would prefer to stand on that side," he said, politely, to Pete, "I don't mind having the sun in my eyes, although I am told that it is rather a drawback in encounters of this nature."

Pete was moved. "I fight fair when I do fight," he said, gruffly, determining to let the little man off with a grazed coat-sleeve. The Reverend Arthur handled his weapon so awkwardly that Pete felt as safe as if in bed. Besides, he was anxious to get the farce over, and ride back to "The Hill" before people were astir in the village. The mare was tethered in the Bush some half-mile away, and it would not be pleasant to be cut off from her.

"One—two—three, I think, will be the best way," said the little man, who had

no intention of attempting to kill Pete, but was determined to assert his manhood before the girl who had scoffed at his courage.

"If you will be so ridiculous," said Sally, striving to believe, in her turn, that the affair was mere empty bravado, and that shots would simply be fired in the air—"If you will be so silly, take your places. You'd better clear out, Pete, as soon as it's over. People will be up and about in an hour."

Pete (he was very angry with Sally) made no answer, but sullenly produced his revolver. "One shot each 'll be enough?" he asked the minister. "We don't want a crowd up here."

"Quite sufficient."

"Then take your places," impatiently cried Sally, anxious to be gone. "Now then, are you ready? One—two—three!"

There was a whip-like crack, as if only one revolver had sounded, and the Reverend Arthur, his left hand clapped to one ear, gazed fixedly towards Pete, who lay clutching at the sand. He had been hit in the top of the arm and was bleeding profusely.

In an instant the little man had thrown down his revolver and was endeavouring to staunch the wound.

"I tried to aim wide, Heaven is my witness," he cried.

"That's the reason you hit me, you durned idiot," growled Pete. "If you'd fired straight at me you'd have miss—" He rolled over on his back and fainted.

Sally's face grew white, her lips firmly set. "This is owing to me, I suppose. Now, Mr. Dacre, what is to be done? If anyone finds him here he'll probably be shot."

The Reverend Arthur gazed at her piteously.

"It's no use saying I didn't mean to hurt him. I only wanted to prove to you I wasn't the coward you thought me. We'd better get him down to my house before anyone's about."

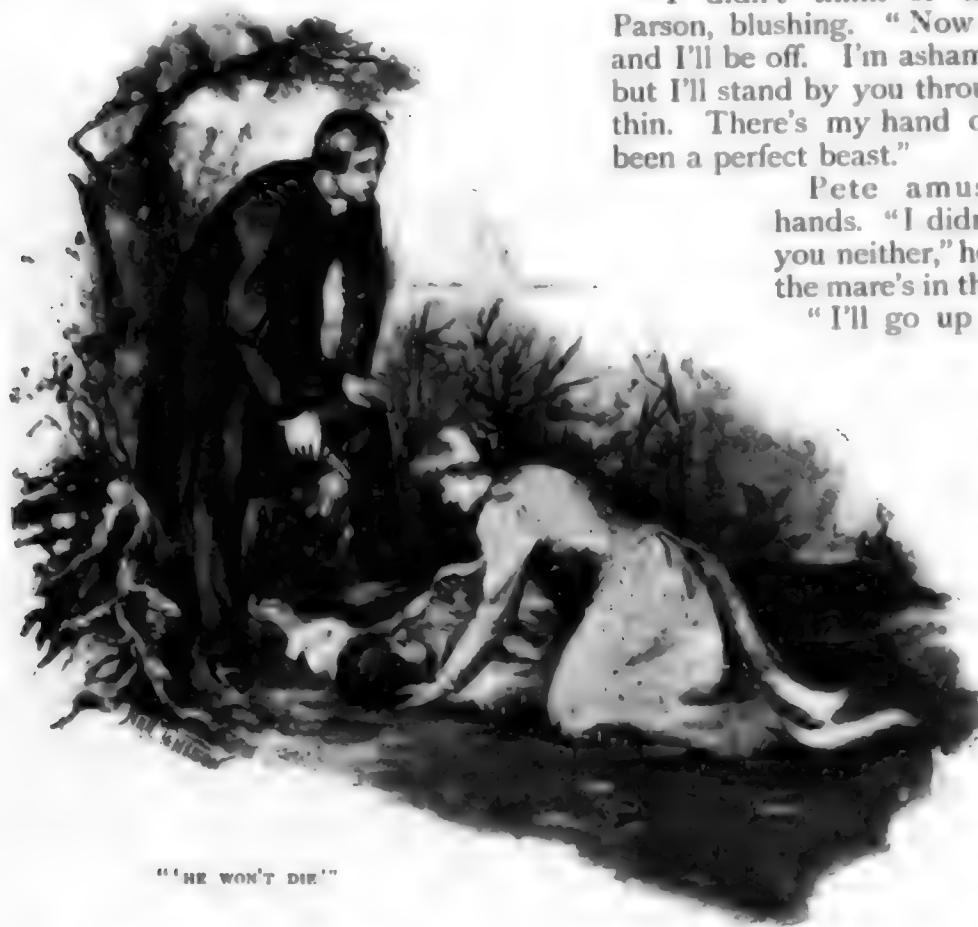
Pete lay an inert mass on the sand.

"If he dies," cried Sally, passionately, bending over him and drawing Pete's curly head to her breast, "I'll kill you myself."

"I am certain he won't die," said the

little man, confidently, although he was white to the lips. "I'm surprised at your giving way like this, Miss Sally. I really am. Now, let us get him into the boat and take him down to my house. The river runs right past the back, and he'll be safe there. I'd better," he blushed delicately, "run round by the way I came, in case you meet anyone."

Sally repentantly understood his delicacy. Pete would be invisible to the general eye as he lay in the bottom of



"HE WON'T DIE!"

the boat. To the casual observer it would simply appear as if she were pulling down stream in the sunshine for mere pleasure in the glittering river and sweep of the sombre hills.

When they got Pete to the boat that worthy opened his eyes with a grin of satisfaction. "I thought it was the Sheriff," he said. "Don't tug at me like that, Sally. I reckon I kin crawl in."

Sally laid her finger on his lips. "Keep quiet," she said peremptorily.

"One would think you were a woman. Mr. Dacre is going to hide you in his house till you're able to get up to 'The Hill' again."

Pete feebly struggled to crawl out of the boat. "Keep where you are," said the Rev. Arthur sternly, "or I'll knock your brains out with this," and he flourished his revolver in front of Pete's nose.

"I wouldn't do that if I was you," said Pete grimly. "T'other chambers might go off."

"I didn't think of that," said the Parson, blushing. "Now shake hands, and I'll be off. I'm ashamed of myself, but I'll stand by you through thick and thin. There's my hand on it. I—I've been a perfect beast."

Pete amusedly shook hands. "I didn't mean to hit you neither," he said. "Sally, the mare's in the usual place."

"I'll go up and turn her loose," said Sally, bending to the oars, as the Rev. Arthur started off for the village to warn his old house-keeper.

One or two people were already stirring as he ran along the main street, but did not think of connecting his

appearance with Sally, floating down stream in her customary leisurely manner. If they noticed the girl at all, it was to contrast the Canadian and English methods of taking exercise, very greatly in favour of the former. So it chanced that when the Rev. Arthur had warned his somewhat stolid housekeeper, who was devoted to him, that a wounded man would shortly be brought in through the back door, and that the outer world was to know nothing of the circumstance,

she merely nodded a pleased acquiescence, and lent the aid of her strong shoulder to support Pete into the house.

Pete was so weak that it was impossible to get him up-stairs into the minister's room. The minister solved the difficulty by dragging a box-bed into the study, and shovelling his most precious books out of the way with unwonted indifference. When Pete again opened his eyes it was to ask for something to eat.

"I ain't had nuthin' since yesterday," he said, pathetically, "an' I'm so hungry I could eat a chunk of wood."

But the old housekeeper shook her head in response to this impassioned appeal.

"You jest lie down, sonny, an' I'll bring you some broth," she said. "If you git fever an' inflammation you'll be here for weeks. I don't want a great untidy boy like you, with your long legs all over the place."

Pete's wonderful eyes looked up into hers, and the old woman immediately brought him another pillow. Then the young scapegrace lay back, possessing his stomach in patience until the broth should be ready.

Sally, who was beginning to feel tired, landed the boat in its usual place, tied it up, and wandered aimlessly up the hill, picking a flower here and there.

Old Man Evans, yawning disconsolately at an empty whisky jug, saw her, and slipped out.

"B'gosh, what's she after now?" he muttered.

He followed Sally until she entered a dense thicket and emerged leading a beautiful mare, who seemed to know her. To his intense surprise, she looped the reins together, turned the mare's face in the direction of "The Hill," clenched her teeth, and struck the beautiful animal a vicious blow with a switch. Then she burst into tears, as the mare galloped away with an indignant snort, and went back to the village, leaving Old Man a prey to the wildest curiosity and remorse.

"It's Pete's mare," he said. "Surelie I didn't plug him! I aimed high a purpose. This yer matter wants some trackin' out."

He followed Sally at a respectful distance until he saw that she had gone home. Just then his keen eye noticed the print of a small, very well-made boot in a damp spot by the road.

"That's the Parson," he muttered, and took up the trail until it led him to the Point.

In a few minutes the whole thing was clear to him. He found out Pete's hiding-place and the marks on the ground where the duel had been fought.

"There's bin a fight," he mused, "an' one of 'em was hit. It wasn't Parson, 'cause one of 'em's bin dragged to the boat, an' made too big a track in the sand. My, but he's bled like a pig. I have it"—he stopped triumphantly—"Sally was foolin' round with the Parson—after the manner of women—an' Pete comes up from ahind the log an' makes the Parson fight him. I allers knew that little man was clean grit. An' the Parson's shot Pete—Parson, as couldn't hit a barn-door!"

He exploded with laughter and rolled into the bushes.

"They've taken Pete down to the Parson's house," he continued, when his paroxysm of mirth had abated—"They've taken Pete down to the Parson's house an' sent his mare back to 'The Hill'; an' here's Pete lyin' right under our noses an' that old fool of a Constable Wrong not a cent the wiser. Wall," he continued, turning back to the village, "I ain't a-goin' to spoil fun. It's quite like old times. I'll jest lie low an' see how they git on. Parson facin' Pete like that! Why, it's a robin a-standin' off an eagle."

Old Man went home, and refrained from communicating his discovery to anyone; but in the afternoon he met the Parson coming from the doctor's house with a bundle in his hand.

"Had a busy mornin', didn't you?" he asked, with a respect which was new to the Rev. Arthur. "Guess if you want any help, Parson, in doxologi—"

But the Parson hurried on, followed by a reassuring wink from Old Man. When he gained his own door he wiped his perspiring forehead.

"That really is a wonderful man," he

said nervously. "I suppose he's found out all about my bloodthirstiness and is trying to make up for wanting to hang me the other night. I shall never understand these people. If a clergyman upholds the honour of his cloth, they want to hang him; if he disgraces it by fighting a duel, they can't do too much for him. Truly the world is out of joint."

CHAPTER VI.

THE EXPEDITION.

AFTER having secured suitable apparel for the forthcoming ball, Old Man discovered that his active mind required more immediate relaxation than the looking forward to an event which could not take place for a fortnight. Suddenly an idea occurred to him, and, brimming over with enthusiasm, he set out to impart it to Ikey Marston, whom he found disconsolately sitting in front of his porch with the air of a man overcome by *ennui*. That worthy brightened up, however, at the approach of his crony, and produced some whisky, of a special brand, which, as he put it, was calculated to soften the heart of a circuit-rider.

"Tain't strong enough for that," said Old Man, breathless with his persevering effort to test the quality of the liquid in question—"Tain't strong enough for that, but 'twill do. You look as if you'd got a fun'ral on hand. What's the matter?"

"What's the matter?" wrathfully retorted Ikey. "You asks me what's the matter, an' I says, as between man and man, old age is the matter! Rheumatiz is the matter! I did think thar was goin' to be a little fun out of this yer 'Hill' business, but it seems to sorter simmer down, an' all the fun's gone out of it. We didn't ought to let that feller git clear. In course you was only bluffin' the Parson, but he didn't know that."

"In course not," said Old Man. "What you wants, Ikey, is a little gentle stimer-lant, somethin' rousin', somethin' cheerful as'll make you forgit them rheumatics."

"That's so," said Ikey, dolefully; "but since that Parson's took it into his head to live here, he's been a kill-joy."

"Now, look here, Ikey," said Old Man,

mysteriously, "if you'll swar on your Bible oath not to let on, I'll tell you somethin' about him as'll make your hair stand."

Ikey promised, and was put in possession of the Parson's escapade that morning, but, to Old Man's surprise, the story only intensified his melancholy.

"I don't see as it makes any difference to me," he said, mournfully. "What I'm tired of is sittin' here waitin' to git old and no fun comin' along. I'm too fond of Sally to give Pete away, so that only makes things worse."

Old Man began to grin.

"Got your mare up from pasture? I'll rouse you, Ikey."

Ikey nodded. "She wants shoein' though."

"Oh, bust her shoes," retorted Old Man. "My hoss is fit to run for his life an' he ain't got no shoes. If you've a mind to start on a little expedition to-night, just git ready about sundown an' sneak out of the village down Hawklesbury way. You might pick up old Grey's mule from the pasture, sorter permiskus like, as you go along. I asked him to-day if I might have her."

"Whar am I to git a saddle for the mule?" asked Ikey, instantly divining that it was wanted for a third person.

Old Man looked cautiously round.

"Never you mind about a saddle," he said. "The chap what's goin' to ride that mule won't be partic'lar about saddles. You bring two or three lengths of raw hide along with you; mebbe they'll come in handy."

Ikey still looked puzzled. "Blamed if I understand," he said.

"What an old idjeot it is," answered his friend, reprovingly. "You never was much of a man, Ikey, for drawin' an inference."

"No," said Ikey, simply, "I'd ruther draw a cart."

Old Man shrugged his shoulders in despair.

"S'posin' as I was to tell you," he said, "I'd made up my mind to go an' prospect round 'The Hill' lookin' for that feller Chilvey Jake, what ud you say to that?"

Ikey's eyes brightened, but he lifted

one hand to his head with a pantomimic suggestion of being scalped.

"It's a mighty fine idea—a real grand idea," he said, cheerfully. "We'll git wiped out though by them 'Hill' folk if we ain't careful."

"In course," said Old Man, placidly. "If thar ain't any wipin' out to be done I don't see whar the fun comes in. My idea was to git round to the back of the 'Hill' to-night, to trail Old Man Jake an' find out whar the son's hidin'. The fool didn't git across the river that night, an' hasn't had the pluck to try since. We'll have to be mighty sharp to git him as it is. If we take the mule along an' have any luck, she'll do to bring him back."

"Why not git another hoss?"

"Because questions would be asked," said Old Man. "'Sides, the mule knows our hosses. You jest sail out at sun-down as if you was goin' down to Hawkesbury, an' you'll find me right thar by the Bush nigh the bay. I reckon we'll wait till dark an' fetch a compass for 'The Hill.' I've often bin by old Jake's farm an' know jest whar it is."

"But won't them 'Hill' fellers be on the look out?" queried Ikey.

"Mebbe, at the front," said Old Man; "they ain't likely to think of our sneakin' round to the back an' gittin' at 'em that way. Why, man, you're lookin' a'most twenty years younger already."

"Twenty!" said Ikey. "I feel forty!"

He tried to cut a caper in the air, but a sudden twinge in his shoulder brought him down to earth again, and he shuffled off to prepare for the expedition.

Ikey employed the rest of the afternoon in sauntering round, promiscuously dropping hints that he was going

down to Hawkesbury that evening with a view to overcoming the melancholy which held him in its black grasp. Contrary to custom, however, he refused all offers of spirituous refreshment, and was followed by wondering glances as he returned to his shanty with an exaggerated feebleness artfully calculated to disarm suspicion. But, in truth, no one gave a thought to him in connection with recent events, it being tolerably well known that Ikey would do whatever Old Man told him, even though it involved personal risk. Consequently, when Ikey mounted his ancient roan mare and started slowly off, leading the gaoler's vicious-looking old mule by a halter, the general impression was that the animal had been entrusted to him for purposes of barter in a spirit of pious confidence by the confiding gaoler.

But when the decrepit-looking old man got clear of the village, he straightened himself in the saddle with a thrill of delight at the prospect of immediate adven-



"'IT'S A MIGHTY FINE IDEA'"

ture. For the time being, he was young again, riding for his life, not beneath the overhanging pines but across a billowy prairie with yelling Indian fiends behind him, their arrows whistling by his ears, and all his energies concentrated on the saving of the ginger-coloured locks which adorned his head.

He was brought back to every-day life by the mule launching a vicious kick at his mare, and then laying hold of her with gleaming teeth. By the time he had separated the two animals and reflected upon the ancestry, demeanour, and habits of them both in sufficiently caustic and scathing terms, he was close to the bay. Lurking in the dim shadows, stood Old Man, endeavouring to stifle the whicker of his own steed as it recognised Ikey's.

Hastily dismounting, Ikey led the animals under cover and joined Old Man.

"Which way?" he briefly asked.

"Thar ain't no manner of way," returned Old Man, "'cept to go straight ahead an' trust to luck to bring us out at the right place. You'd better sit tight an' take care of your head. You kin leggo the mule. She'll foller us all right."

As he spoke, he tied the mule's halter round her neck, climbed heavily into the saddle, and started off at a long, loping trot through the dense Bush, at times almost lying on his horse's neck to avoid being knocked out of the saddle by overhanging boughs.

Once out of sight of the road, there was nothing but instinct, and such woodcraft as Old Man possessed, to guide them on their way. They were in the primeval forest, sometimes following a tiny deer-path, at others scrambling their animals over fallen trees and trusting to them to pierce the undergrowth. Soon the mule, instead of meekly following behind, pushed to the front, and shambled along, with nose to the ground and long ears laid viciously back whenever a blow from Old Man's whip stimulated her progress. Sometimes the path grew wide enough for the two old cronies to ride abreast. The dense gloom of the Bush, the scraping of branches against

their weather-beaten faces, the distant howl of a dog, the almost noiseless beat-beat of hoofs upon the path, filled them with foreboding. For the first time, both of them realised that their love of excitement was likely to lead them into trouble. Neither were men to draw back on this account; they tightened belts, took an occasional pull at the whisky flasks, and urged their horses onward.

After three hours' hard travelling, they emerged into a little open glade, and Old Man, with a cry of consternation, carefully secured the mule, as that eccentric animal cheerfully endeavoured to make her way up to "The Hill." "I'd forgotten this beast was born and bred here," he said, "and wondered she never made a mistake."

Ikey cast a malevolent glance at the slab-sided, long-eared hybrid placidly cropping the grass at their feet. "She'd a jest led us right into a hornet's nest," he said. "Let's git round here an' keep outen the moonlight. It'll be over 'The Hill,' d'rectly."

Carefully avoiding the moonlight, they rode onward, skirting the base of "The Hill," and maintaining a watchful lookout for fear of possible surprise. When they were within half-a-mile of Jake's farm, they dismounted, tied the animals to a tree, and went forward, the one shuffling in the other's footsteps like Indian braves on the war-path.

The farmhouse was on a little eminence without a particle of cover within a hundred yards. Old Man halted irresolutely, and hoisted Ikey up into the branches of a big cedar.

"Jest squat thar in the fork an' cover your gun bar'l," he said from below. "Now, lend me a hand an' I'll git up a peg or two higher."

"I don't see how this yer foolishness, a-tryin' to play at squir'l's, is a-goin' to help us," said Ikey.

Old Man gave a snort of contempt as he scrambled up into the tree, and narrowly missed kicking Ikey's cap off.

"In course he ain't thar," he said, waving his arm towards the little farmhouse. "The old man ud nat'rally argey, s'posin' we git by 'The Hill' sellers, a lot of us 'ud make for his place straight

off. They're keepin' Chilvey Jake low till things has blown over a bit. Mebbe they think we'll come to terms an' let bygones be bygones. You bet, the old man'll be out with food presently. We'll just stick here till he comes."

"I'm a-goin' to sleep," said Ikey presently. "You take first watch."

Old Man nodded a displeased acquiescence, and mounted still higher until he found a comfortable fork on which to rest. His back against the trunk, he could see right down through the tunnel-shaped aperture in the boughs the little farmhouse, with its shining tin roof upon which the moonlight played, and rippled, and gleamed, until the smooth surface undulated like a sea. But Old Man had not robbed himself of his night's rest for the sake of pictorial effects; he was there on a much grimmer errand. If this Chilvey Jake affair were not nipped in the bud before it began to ramify and assume gigantic proportions, Old Man knew very well that many lives would be lost, including that of the adventurous Pete Harrison, for whom he had a sneaking fondness. It would simplify matters considerably if Chilvey Jake could be caught and hurried off to Ottawa by the Sheriff, there to await his trial. If he were formally handed over to the Vigilants, that meant future reprisals from "The Hill" folk, whereas if the law took its course, they would have no possible ground for complaint in the future.

Musing thus, he was aroused from his abstraction by the jarring sound of an opened door, and, looking up, saw an old man come out of the little house—an old man armed to the teeth and with a bundle on his shoulder.

The farmer hesitated a moment, looking round with keen, alert glance. Then he came towards Old Man's tree, but turned off by the left when within twenty yards of it. Old Man, with one hand on Ikey's mouth to stop his snores, waited a couple of minutes, despite sundry muffled protests from that suddenly awakened worthy, and was about to slide down the cedar when the gleaming tip of a gun-barrel shone out from where Jake senior had entered the Bush. Old Man could have kicked himself for his stupidity.

"In course, he's waitin' a bit to see if he's follered," he whispered to Ikey. "Keep still, you onnateral old idjeot, or I'll drop you into the briars."

Ikey apoplectically endeavoured to restrain a chuckle.

"Take off that 'ere plaster fist of yours," he whispered back, "an' let me git a little air. I'm nigh suffocated."

"You'd have been nigher still," said Old Man, as the gun-barrel disappeared in the Bush, "if you hadn't left off soundin' that fog-horn of yours. A nice old man you are to come out an' track people. I'd have done better by myself."

"Shet up," said Ikey, joyously. "Is he thar? That's the main point."

"In course," said Old Man. "It's a good thing for us I didn't go to sleep, or he'd have potted us both."

"Why don't we go after him then?"

"Why?" growled Old Man. "I've bin all my life tryin' to teach you somethin', Ikey, but you're the most turnip-headed coon I ever come across."

"That's so," said Ikey, placidly; "that's so; but, now you've got over all your complements, I wants to know why we ain't goin' after that chap when we've come all this yer way a purpose?"

Old Man leant back, laughing silently.

"To think as I should have to explain. He's goin' down to some cave or camp ain't he, with food?"

"Yes."

"He'll leave it thar an' come back agin, won't he?"

"Ye-es."

"A nice innercent pair of babes we'd look if we tumbled right slam-jam into his arms, shouldn't we?"

"Wall, what are you a-goin' to do?" asked Ikey. "One 'ud think you was runnin' the Universe. Wade in an' don't mind me, only do somethin'."

"You jest keep your mouth shet for half-an-hour, if you can," said Old Man peremptorily, "till he comes back 'ithout his bundle."

"That's all right," said the incredulous Ikey. "That's all right. That's no denyin' as you've got a' head on you; but, s'posin' he does come back, what's the good? He's in that house yonder;

we're up in this yer tree ; an' Chilvey's the Lord knows whar in the Bush."

" S'posin' he goes every night with food an' drink for his son," said Old Man impatiently, " he'll leave a trail, won't he? The trail after that thunderstorm we had yesterday 'll be soft. Why, it's jest like print."

" I never could read print nor writin' neither," said Ikey apologetically, all his faith in Old Man's wisdom returning.

" Wall, I kin," said Old Man. " What time does a man gin'rally sleep soundest? Mebbe you don't know that neither?"

" Jest afore dawn," said Ikey.

" Then we'll wait till dawn."

" We can't git back the same way. If anyone was to find out, we'd be overtaken, sure."

" Wall, we ain't a-goin' back the same way," said Old Man testily. " We'll git round here an' strike the main road to the Four Corners when we've got him, an' ride for all we're worth : it's our only chance. That's why I brought the mule. She'll keep up 'ithout any trouble if we can once git a-goin'. S—s—s—sh ! I heerd a twig crack. He's comin' back. S—s—s—sh ! Darn it all, thar's two of 'em."

They could hear voices gradually coming nearer. " To-morrow night," one said; " to-morrow night."

" I'm about sick of hidin' in that cave," answered Chilvey's voice. " Good-night, Pap."

The old man's solemn voice again struck on their ears.

" You've bin a heap of trubble to us all, Chilvey. Me an' your mother was allowin' mebbe, if you got clar this time, you'd live more peaceable."

" Don't you worry about me, Pap," said the young man, in confident tones. " Once clar of this yer place it's very little I'll be botherin' you agin."

" Keep a good look out, Jake, an' be sparin' with the whisky," the old man entreated. " I've a presentment them Four Corner folk'll git you yet, an' I'd ruther see you dead first, if I had to kill you myself. You allers was too fond of shootin'. Your mammy 'lowed last night she'd seen you plugged clean through. She's that restless of

nights, a-throwin' up her arms an' wakin' with a shriek: 'They've got him ! Wake up ! They've got him !' She's kind of grey round the temples over it."

The young man endeavoured to laugh it off.

" Good-night, Pap," he said. " Tomorrow, at ten, you'll be round with the boys, an' I'll put the river atween me an' them Four Corner folk. I'm only sorry I didn't plug Old Man Evans an' that sandy-haired fool as goes about with him."

" A sorter lean, old, bandy-legged man ?" enquired Mr. Jake, senior, forgetting his forebodings. " It 'ud have bin safer if you'd had time. You never kin tell what a squint-eye'll be up to, neither."

Old Man shook with rage at this allusion to his infirmity. It was now Ikey's turn to put a warning hand over his mouth.

" Wall, so long, Pap," said the younger man.

" So long," returned his father, with a renewed attempt at cheerfulness. " An' —an' in case I forgit it to-morrow when the boys is round, you havin' blown your pile, so to speak, here's all I could raise on the old place. Me an' your mother won't be wantin' much now; this mout give you a fresh start."

" If he don't take that money we'll let him off," whispered Old Man. " If he does, I'll haul him down to the Four Corners, dead or alive."

But Chilvey Jake, unaware of what momentous issue hung upon his action, carelessly took the dollar bills, without a word of thanks, and thrust them into his pocket.

" So long," said his father, appearing in the moonlight. Then he came back again. " I'm sorter narvous to-night, Chilvey. Sorter narvous. Keep a good look out."

The old man's uneasiness communicated itself to his son. He came to the edge of the Bush and thrust out a shaggy head.

" Can't I sleep at the house ?" he asked. " I'm tired of livin' in caves."

The old man pushed him hastily back, with a farewell wrench of the hand, and

crawled slowly across the moonlight. When he reached his own door, he turned round, waved a red handkerchief, and went in.

"Now," said Old Man, as Chilvey Jake returned to the Bush, "turn an' turn about till daybreak. Then we'll have to git up an' hustle."

Just as the first faint streak of dawn tipped the outer branches of the cedar with light, the ever-vigilant Old Man rousing his companion with a shake, the two dropped noiselessly from the thick foliage to the ground and followed the track make by Chilvey Jake and his father. The process was a slow and laborious one, for Old Man found it necessary to go down on his knees more than once and feel for the indentations in the muddy ground. As they crawled on through the dense undergrowth, the brambles scratching their faces, Old Man lit a small lantern and held his cap over it so as to shield the light. In this fashion, after a quarter of an hour's laborious tracking, they came to an earthen bank covered with bushes, and there the path ended.

Old Man made a noiseless and slow circuit of the bank with growing impatience, parting the bushes which grew around until he thrust one long arm into space and knew that he had found an entrance to the cave. He hastily drew back in order to hold a council of war with Ikey, who was anxious to enter first.

"If he hears us comin' in," said Ikey, in a whisper, "he's bound to plug us both."

"If you'd ruther go back, Ikey," said Old Man quietly, "jest look out for the hosses, an' wait for me to turn up."

Ikey nearly broke a blood-vessel with rage. Owing to the necessity for silence he dare not relieve his feelings by swearing, but the effort to restrain them nearly cost him an apoplectic fit. Without condescending to answer Old Man, he took up the little lantern and, noiselessly parting the bushes, prepared to crawl into the cave.

"It'll widen out," he said, "after two or three yards. You rest your rifle on my shoulder; I'll keep the cap over the

lantern till we find out whar he is; then you kin cover him while I do the tyin' up."

Without a moment's hesitation they noiselessly crawled into the cave, Ikey pausing occasionally to feel whether he had yet reached the end of the narrow passage. After he had gone a few feet, the low breathing of the man he sought told him that they had nothing to fear.

Directly Old Man left the passage, Ikey uncovered the lantern and turned the light full on Chilvey Jake's countenance.

Hence it was that worthy woke from troubled dreams to find himself confronted with two gleaming rifle-barrels, and heard Old Man's imperious voice order him to throw up his hands.

Even Old Man, accustomed though he was to deal lightly with life and death, felt a pang of compunction at the agonised terror gradually stealing over the unhappy wretch's countenance as his hands shot up to the roof of the cave. It was the work of a second for Ikey to creep forward and possess himself of Chilvey Jake's revolvers and knife (he cautiously placed them behind him in Old Man's charge) ere proceeding to scientifically truss his victim with a couple of lengths of raw hide which he produced from the depths of his voluminous pockets. Then, without a word, he took Chilvey Jake by the collar, turned that discomfited worthy on his back, and proceeded to haul him out of the cave head foremost.

When they were once more in the open air, Old Man cautiously extinguished the lantern and lifted Chilvey Jake. So unnerved was the latter that he could scarcely stand on his feet, and fell up against a tree, under the impression that he was going to be hanged immediately.

"Don't be afeared," said Ikey, reassuringly. "We ain't a-goin' to judge and jury you; all we've got to do is to tote your shiverin' carcase down to the Four Corners, so as the Sheriff kin take you up to Kingston afore the boys know you've called."

Chilvey Jake's teeth ceased to chatter at this unlooked-for news. Now that

the immediate bitterness of death had disappeared, he was able to see some gleam of hope in the situation. Once out of the Four Corners, there would always be a chance of escape either from the Sheriff, or before being put upon his trial. He assumed a swaggering air which was belied by his white face, and nodded to his captors with impudent assurance.

Old Man untied the raw hide thong round Chilvey Jake's legs and fastened it to the one which confined his arms. Then he took the other end of the rope, significantly cocked his revolver, and motioned Ikey to lead the way.

"If so be," he said to Chilvey Jake, "you feel inclined to stumble or haul this yer rope out of my hand, you might jest as well remember the revolver's pretty sure to go off at the same time."

Chilvey Jake fully appreciated the significance of this grim hint, and the three men walked silently through the Bush until they came to the horses. After a considerable amount of hoisting and shoving, Chilvey Jake was mounted on the mule—an indignity which that animal resented by endeavouring to take a mouthful out of the prisoner's leg. A blow on the nose from Old Man's leg-of-mutton fist showed her that such proceedings would not be tolerated, so she stood still, blowing herself out from force of habit as Ikey endeavoured to tie the prisoner's legs beneath her belly. A prod from his knee showed her the futility of thus distending herself, and she collapsed suddenly, greatly to the satisfaction of the prisoner, who was beginning to fear lest he should split in two.

Taking the mule by the halter, Old Man hastily mounted, and, with the prisoner in the centre, started to skirt "The Hill," and strike the main road leading to the Four Corners, the captive saying never a word, but riding with the hanging head of one who goes to his doom.

In an hour's time they struck the main road. Old Man turned to Ikey with a congratulatory grin. Suddenly the latter listened intently, and shifted his revolver to a more convenient position.

"They're after us," he cried, "ridin' like hell!"

In another moment the two horses were flying down the road at a rate which anyone unacquainted with the hardiness of such steeds would have imagined impossible, the mule easily keeping pace with them of her own accord.

Thus the chase continued for a couple of miles. Not a pursuer was to be seen, but a glance at the grim faces of his companions told the prisoner that they did not rely upon this fact as evidence of their safety.

"The old man must have come back jest as we left," gasped Ikey, vigorously plying a convenient length of raw hide on the bony flanks of his mare. "If they waited till we took this road, an' some of 'em tried to cut us off, thar'll be trouble."

Old Man rode on, a placid smile upon his lips. He had been craving for excitement for some time past, and now there was every probability of there being more than enough.

"You kin understand," he said, pleasantly and easily to the prisoner, "if the boys ahind thar do come up with us, it won't make no difference in the gin'ral ultramatum of things."

Chilvey Jake turned still paler, fully appreciating the significance of this hint. He cursed his father's anxiety, as he strained at the bonds which held him, in the vain hope that they might have slackened.

The chase continued for several miles, until the fugitives rapidly neared the loop road from "The Hill," which joined the main road about a couple of miles from the Four Corners. They passed it two hundred yards ahead of three men, who came galloping down at breakneck speed, yelling to them to stop. The foremost pursuer was a grey-haired man on a white horse, whom Chilvey Jake recognised as his father. Old Man's and Jake's animals were going as strongly as ever, but the white horse was nearly spent, and the prisoner realised that in a few minutes there was every probability of his once more becoming familiar with the Four Corners gaol.

The old man on the white horse seemed to understand this too, for, with a cry of despair, he pulled up, flung himself from the saddle, and fired, throwing up his hands with a gesture to heaven as if imploring forgiveness for shooting his own son. The bullet struck Chilvey Jake fair and square between the shoulders, and it was with a dead man on her back that the mule galloped into the Four Corners and dashed up to the little green before the gaol, as if conscious that she was performing an act of justice in thus bringing the body of the murderer to the scene of his crime. Old Man and Ikey followed the mule, flung themselves from their panting horses, and stood waiting until the Law claimed the body. When this was done, and the dead man carried inside the gaol, all animation departed from Old Man's countenance. He strode dejectedly away to his shanty, seeing before him in the brilliant sunshine of the summer morning the set face of the white-haired old man who had saved his family from the disgrace of having one of its members publicly executed as a malefactor.

CHAPTER VII.

CHILVEY JAKE GOES HOME.

THE general feeling at the Four Corners with regard to Chilvey Jake's death, was one of humorous regret that he should have died in his boots when there were so many conclusive reasons for a more appropriate ending. He had robbed his expectant friends and acquaintances of a spectacle which most of them considered they had an indubitable right to witness. It was difficult, therefore, to forgive this lack of consideration for the feelings of others, especially after Ikey and Old Man had so nobly endeavoured to vindicate the right of Mr. Justice Lynch to hold his court when and how he pleased. However, there was no getting over the fact that Chilvey Jake was dead, so the Sheriff went round, with lowering brow, to summon a jury for the necessary inquest. The privileged beings called to serve on the jury felt their importance immensely increased by the Sheriff's crestfallen air as they met together in the whitewashed gaol-parlour

and, after the usual formalities, waited the arrival of the county coroner.

The coroner was inclined to be snapish and finish the affair with business-like promptitude; but the gentlemen of the jury had come prepared to spend an evening in discussing their verdict and unanimously declined to be hurried. As a preliminary step, after being sworn, they filed into another room to view the body, exchanging facetious remarks in undertones on entering. Unconsciously, they hushed their voices when near the spot where the rigid outlines of the dead man's form could be seen sharply defined beneath a white sheet. The mysterious solemnity of death, the quietness of the motionless figure on the pine table, gradually produced its effect upon even the most hardened, and they returned to the scene of their deliberations with a manifest diminution of the lightheartedness with which they had commenced their gruesome task. There was very little evidence to be called, Ikey and Old Man prudently suppressing any announcement of their intention to hand over the captive to the Sheriff, who sat gnawing his sausage-shaped fingers with the air of an ill-used man, conscious that his special department had been taken out of his hands by the officiousness of people who would have done better to mind their own business. The simplicity and daring of the two cronies' scheme filled him with unwilling admiration; at the same time, he experienced a feeling of intense disgust that he had not sought their advice, and done something of the kind himself. The capture of Chilvey Jake would have confirmed his prestige with the population of the Four Corners for ever and a day. Now, he sat there, stolidly pulling his moustache, an unwilling spectator admitted as an act of courtesy to witness the last part of this drama which had taken place beneath his unconscious nose.

A slight touch of humour was infused into the proceedings when the gentlemen of the jury discussed their verdict. The coroner himself was strongly in favour of *selo de se*, arguing with considerable obstinacy that the deceased virtually took his own life by escaping

from the gaol ; a second wiseacre wished to add what he called a vote of thanks to "our public-spirited fellow-citizens," whilst a third suggested "Found killed by parties unknown."

"I don't see the good of all this," the Sheriff interrupted, "seein' as you *know* the old man shot him."

The Sheriff's informal interruption was not listened to with the respect to which he considered himself entitled. "What did the old man shoot him for?" sarcastically queried Ikey.

"To get rid of the disgrace of his bein' publicly condemned, I s'pose," testily answered the Sheriff.

"An' do you think, Mr. Sheriff, we're a-goin' back on a father's feelins like that?" enquired Old Man. "No, sir. We might want as much done for ourselves some day. The old man's saved us a heap of trouble, an' we orter let him know as his public-spirited action is reciprocated." He paused with delight to note the effect of this grandiloquent word on the Sheriff. "It seems to me, gentlemen of the jury, the square an' fair thing to do 'ud be to bring it in 'Died by the visitation of God,' an' send a man round with a shot-gun to Jim Case" (Case was the gifted editor of *The Four Corners Gazette*) "jest to make sure he gits the partic'lars all right for his paper. Unless you stands over Jim Case with the muzzle of your gun pretty handy, he's apt to take a different view of things; we don't want no mistakes in this yer business."

And, to the Sheriff's great disgust, the "gentlemen of the jury" brought in a verdict of "Died by the visitation of God," the majority of them hastily going over to the printing-office to see that the editor was sufficiently posted in his facts. That individual, realising from past experience how futile would be any resistance, immediately acquiesced in the view taken by his fellow-citizens, and exhausted the office stock of adjectives in an eloquent description of what he euphemistically called, "The accident which has robbed a bereaved parent of the solace and sympathising companionship of the son of his old age." This tribute to Mr. Jake's Spartan fortitude having been given to the compositors to

set up, the editor and jury adjourned to the Four Corners' hotel, leaving a man in the office, with a loaded revolver, to prevent mistakes, and solemnly congratulated themselves on the wisdom which had brought the affair to so satisfactory a conclusion.

Whilst this little matter was being arranged, the gaoler, with the aid of Ikey and Old Man, got down a rudely-fashioned pine coffin from the rafters of the shed in his garden.

It was the rule of the gaol to keep one coffin ready for emergencies, so that it could be brought into the prison through the little door which had served to facilitate Chilvey Jake's escape.

When the coffin was brought in, out of consideration for the gaoler, who was very tender-hearted, Ikey and Old Man refrained from conversation, and steadily set to work by the light of a rough pine torch which left them half in shadow beneath the prison wall. After a time, Ikey, who had artistic tendencies, ceased to shovel out the moist earth, and devoted himself to carving a number on the board to stand at the head of the grave. There were several other graves in the prison-yard, some of the boards to which were mossy and worm-eaten, the numbers almost illegible and filled up. On reference to the prison journal one could obtain the names of the men who mouldered beneath, and, with a refinement of unconscious cruelty, prisoners taking exercise could not avoid passing the spot, thus receiving a salutary warning of what their fate was likely to be, should they persist in their present evil careers.

In silence still, the three men carried the coffin across a patch of moonlight, to crumble to decay beneath the shadow of the wall. In death, Chilvey Jake was more impressive than alive. As Old Man shovelled in the moist mould and trod it down, he thought of the father who had shot his son to escape shame. One man had given rise to a very promising vendetta ; there was every prospect of the vendetta continuing unless something could be arranged to pacify "The Hill" people. Their rude code of honour demanded a man for a

man, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. Old Man, resting on his spade, realised that his recent action had not tended to minimise the danger. Then he remembered the poor boy so foully done to death by the desperado at his feet, and ceased to trouble himself about the matter.

Old Man was just stamping the earth on the top of the grave, and artistically rounding it off in readiness to replace the sod which had been cut away, when Mrs. Grey came into the gaol-yard, and, with averted face, spoke a few words to her husband. The latter, who had been praying apart, started anxiously to his feet, with a disturbed glance at Ikey and Old Man. "His father's come for the body," he said.

"W-what?" demanded Ikey.

"The old man's come down for the body."

"He isn't armed," said Mrs. Grey. "He jest drove straight down through the village an' nobody offered so much as to lay a finger on him. When I told him the verdict, it didn't seem to make no difference. He was ready either to give himself up for shootin' his son or to take him away."

"I'd be much obliged," said the gaoler to Ikey and Old Man, "if so be as you'd clar out the back way. The old man might sorter feel prejudiced agin you."

Old Man and Ikey nodded awkwardly; they had no wish to encounter the bereaved parent, especially when his mission was a pacific one. Had he been prepared to fight they would have welcomed him with effusion, under the impression that he was only claiming his due; but, somehow, as they emerged from the shadow of the wall into the quiet moonlight, the presence of Death touched their rude hearts with an unconscious tinge of poetry. After all, Death was something no one could escape; and it seemed idle to run the risk of meeting it now, only to find a forgotten grave in which to moulder until the Judgment Day.

They went quietly away through the postern gate. When they were safely hidden in the shadow of the stone wall, Mrs. Grey went back and returned with

old Jake, who stood with the moonlight falling on his grim features, cap in hand, undecided which way to turn, his long, gnarled, and bony fingers trembling with nervous embarrassment as the gaoler stepped out from the shadow of the wall and, in deference to the other, also bared his silver head.

"You was wantin' to see me?" he asked quietly, shaking the other's hand.

Old Jake limply took the extended hand, then dropped it.

"If it's all the same to you," he said, "I've come down for my own. You havin' done with the corpse, so to speak, he's mine and—his mother's."

The gaoler was embarrassed by the novelty of this request. It seemed to him only equitable that Chilvey Jake, having paid the penalty of his crime, should be free to go hence in the body and return to his own people. He took the old man's hand and led him into the shadow of the wall, pointing to the newly-made grave with a significant gesture.

Old Jake nervously mopped his damp forehead with the red handkerchief which he had waved in the moonlight when parting from his son, and stood quietly regarding the grave.

"I'm much obliged to you, gaoler, for all you've done," he said; "and the corpse is much obliged to you for all you've done. You might have jest let him drift, but he told me how you laboured to convert him. Seein' your size and weight as a man of prayer," he added, with singular gravity, "I'd say as you've pulled him through, and he's all right up thar." He pointed to the clear sky lit up with the silvery radiance of the softly shining moon, and again mopped his damp forehead.

This was altogether a new point of view for the gaoler. He was pleased with the implied tribute to the efficacy of his labours, and, in face of the old man's directness, could not enter into statements about conversion and being born again. It seemed to him cruel to Jake to destroy this belief in his (the gaoler's) powers; and, moreover, there was nothing to be gained by pointing out that Chilvey Jake had died the same

hardened, unscrupulous villain that he had lived. He stood looking down irresolutely at the ground, not knowing what to do.

His doubt was cut short by Old Jake.

"You bein' an officer of the law an' a powerfully-inspired preacher," said Old Jake, "mebbe you'd ruther not have a hand in this yer job. Many a time when he was a tiny child I've picked him up an' taken him sobbin' to his mother's breast. Many a time I've carried him in my arms when the floods was out, an' he too small to walk. An' now, when he can't walk no more, his mother's waitin' in the old home for me to bring him back to her. He's been roamin' round sorter keerless like for this many a year. It's fitten he should come home to stay. Many a time his mother's left me an' him in the wood-shed together to try an' straighten him out a bit; an' now, when he can't say nuthin' in his own defence, I'm jest goin' to tote him back to the old home whar his mother waits to meet him."

The gaoler found himself unable to speak for a moment.

"She knows that?" he asked at length, pointing to the grave.

The old man nodded.

"Seein' as how the fam'ly honour was consarned," he explained, "she knowed 'twas the only thing to be done. 'You had to kill him,' she said, 'to save him an' us from disgrace; but when a father chasteneth his child he forgives him an' brings him home. Go you down to the Four Corners an' bring my son back to me.'"

The gaoler nodded with grave sympathy.

"I'll bring the cart round to the little door," he said. "When you're ready, I'll help you with it."

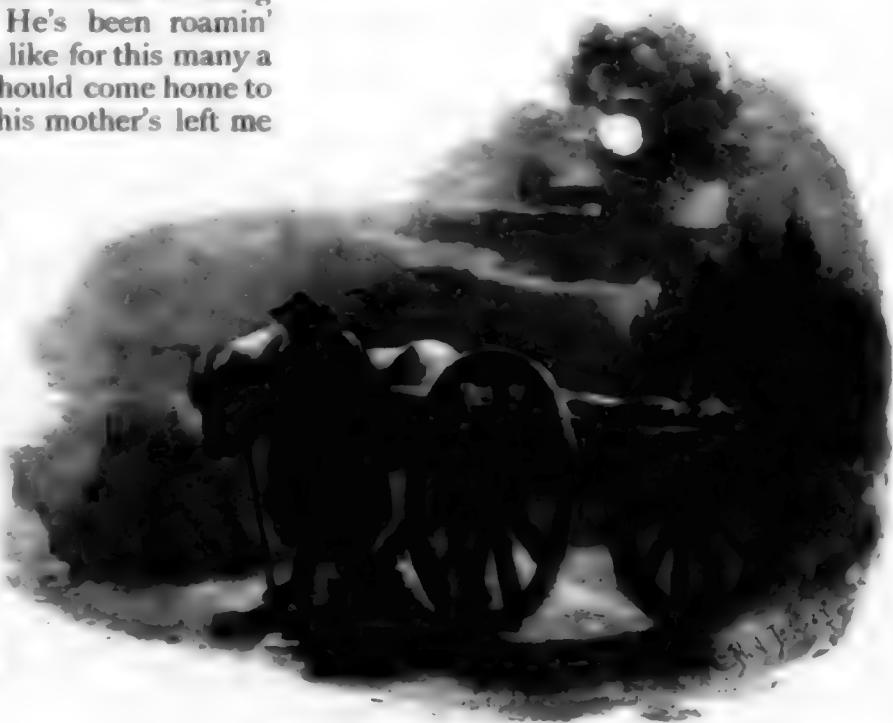
The old man again shook hands with him.

"Me an' the corpse is grateful," he simply said, and, taking a spade, began to dig at the newly heaped-up grave.

When the gaoler returned half-an-hour later, he was startled to hear the crash of rending wood.

Old Jake had dragged the coffin out of the grave and was laboriously wrenching away the lid.

"Seein' as how," he said, with simple directness, wiping the perspiration from his forehead with the back of his hand, "I'm takin' him away from here, I ain't goin' to steal no government property neither."



"THE CART SLOWLY CRESTED THE HILL

Between them, they dragged the coffin out into the moonlight. Bidding the old man stay there, the gaoler hastily ran into the adjoining Bush and came back to the cart with fragrant branches of cedar, with which to strew the bottom and sides. Between them, they carried the strangely inert and rigid body across the gaol-yard and placed it in the cart, Old Jake taking off his coat to make a pillow for the dead man's head. Then he carefully placed a clean handkerchief over his son's sightless orbs, as if to shut out the cold beams of moonlight, and, after again shaking hands with the

gaoler, and turning the old white horse round, prepared to depart, leading it by the head.

The gaoler stood watching the cart go creaking down the lane until it turned into the high road and slowly climbed a hill, the old man shuffling along by the side with drooping head and bent shoulders. The cart slowly crested the hill, halted a moment for the horse to breathe, and then disappeared over the top with its ghastly burden through the quiet night.

Gaoler Grey closed the little door in the wall and carefully refilled the empty grave, at the same time placing a number at the top. Then he went into the gaol and sat long, picturing to himself the aged mother patiently waiting to take this erring son to her withered breast.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WEDDING.

AT first the strangeness of Pete Harrison's surroundings in the house of the Rev. Arthur acted with a prejudicial effect on his usually mercurial spirits; he was depressed by the unnecessary amount of literature in the world; it seemed to rise up and crush him; that the Rev. Arthur should have the pluck to read all the books lying round, filled him with an undying admiration for that gentleman. He superintended the small cleric's pistol-practice from the window, without being seen, and encouraged him to persevere by the statement that if a man were known to be a good shot his moral influence always increased in proportion to the correctness of his aim. The general inhabitants of the Four Corners, too, were immensely gratified to think that the clergyman was dropping the "Old Country" style and accustoming himself to the exigencies of Canadian life. Most of them, however, were under the pleasing, but mistaken, impression that the Rev. Arthur was rapidly qualifying himself for a raid on "The Hill" folk, an intention which he would have been the first to disclaim. A few of them even condescended to listen to his sermons, particularly when he preached from Old Testament texts.

In popular opinion at the Four Corners, the word "Amalakite" gradually grew to be regarded as one of opprobrious abuse for "The Hill" people; a description of smiting anyone hip and thigh evoked sustained enthusiasm, which the unconscious preacher attributed to the force of his own eloquence, and, finding these battle-pieces were greatly in demand, satisfied his rude flock with as many as he could possibly reconcile it with his own conscience to describe. His sanguinary sermons also helped to work off his own unrequited love for Sally and win for him the fervent admiration of Irene Spinks, who, having read in English novels that the one way to gain a clergyman's heart was to make him slippers, immediately procured some canvas and coloured silks and began her self-imposed task with an assiduity which provoked Sally's unconcealed mirth.

Small wonder, then, that the inhabitants of the Four Corners looked with approval on Sally's frequent visits to the Rev. Arthur's house, under the belief that this lively young woman was experiencing a change of heart. She was always accompanied by Irene—a concession to propriety which seemed immensely gratifying to everyone. "High-toned" was the general description of the situation. It is to be regretted that Sally lent colour to the general impression by ostentatiously carrying a hymn-book in her hand, whenever setting forth with Irene on her daily visit. "The pluck of that little cuss!" said Ikey, referring to the Rev. Arthur, when holding forth upon the situation to an admiring crowd in Miller's store—"The pluck of that little cuss in wrastlin' with a gal like Sally! An' it's my belief, mind you," he continued, to his enraptured auditors—"It's my belief, mind you, he'll win. Stands to reason a man as has read all them books an' knows so much about fightin' is bound to git thar every time. His shootin', too, is amazin'. He was practisin' away thar yesterday at a little bit of paper pinned on the fence as I went by. 'Good mornin', Mr. Marston,' says he. 'Mornin', says I. 'I'm just acquirin' a reasorable pro-

ficiency in the use of firearms,' says he. 'Fire away,' says I ; an'—an' he fired."

Ikey indulged in silent laughter at the reminiscence. "What's the idjeot chokin' at?" indignantly demanded Old Man. "Did he hit anythin'?"

"Yes," said Ikey, wiping his eyes. "O Lor', yes, plum centre."

"What was it?" demanded Miller.

"Old Man's goat," said Ikey. "It tumbled over the river bank an's away down to the Falls by this time."

"Damn!" said Old Man, solemnly, and continued to smoke.

"What did the Parson say?" asked someone else.

"You didn't think I was goin' to let on an' discourage him?" demanded Ikey, with fine scorn. "'The poor animal seems to be unwell,' says he. 'It's got a fit,' says I ; an' he was quite satisfied as the cold water'd revive it."

Meantime the unconscious clergyman, after finishing his morning's practice, and vainly awaiting the reappearance of Old Man's goat, went into the house for breakfast, and found that healthy young savage, Pete, looking somewhat wistfully out at the sunshine. The Reverend Arthur, from motives of delicacy, did not like to suggest that his guest was well enough to depart. There was also another reason why Pete should return to "The Hill." The ball was fixed for the end of the coming week, and it would not be pleasant if the festivities were interrupted by "The Hill" men, desirous of avenging the supposed death of Pete. He mentioned the matter to Pete, who paused in the act of conveying a chunk of bacon to his mouth with a grin.

"Oh, they know I'm all right. Sally sent a boy up to my people with a message. They'd have been down here raisin' Cain long ago if I hadn't done so."

"I never thought of that," said the Reverend Arthur. "Have some marmalade?"

"That English sticky stuff of yours ain't bad," said Pete, helping himself freely. "When we've settled up this yer business, Parson, you'll have to come an' stay with me. I ain't quite satisfied with your shootin' yet. You nearly sent a

bullet through Ikey this mornin'. Seems to me, Parson, if you want to hit a thing you've only got to aim at somethin' else, an' it's a dead sure thing."

The Parson blushed guiltily, for Pete's remark confirmed his own inward misgivings about the goat.

It was now Pete's turn to become confused.

"Thar's one thing me an' Sally want done afore I go," he said.

The Parson looked him squarely in the face.

"What is it, Pete?"

"But I don't know whether it's the right thing to ask you to do it though. I fixed it all up with Sally yesterday."

The Parson smiled.

"Pete, I'll be only too glad, if you want me to marry you to Sally. I've loved her honestly and well, but she doesn't love me. She never will love me, and she does love you. Life is too short to be wasted in pursuit of the unattainable. Besides, I owe you some reparation for that hole in your shoulder."

Pete was perplexed. He felt sufficient faith in the Rev. Arthur to know that the little clergyman meant what he said, but there must be some other reason for this sudden change of front. Then the reason dawned upon him. He gave a low whistle and asked for some more of "the sticky stuff."

"Irene's a nice girl, Parson," he said, somewhat inconsequently. "If someone was to take away them little freckles of her'n, you wouldn't find a purtier gal anywhere, 'cept Sally."

With lamb-like innocence the Parson fell into the trap.

"She is a most charming girl," he said heartily. "Until recently, I hadn't the slightest idea that she took such serious views of life."

"I hadn't neither," said Pete, with a grin. "Seems to me, Parson, you must have had some improvin' conversation with her whiles me an' Sally was talkin' over our own affairs."

The Rev. Arthur hastily finished his breakfast. There were one or two points which Irene had seemed anxious to have cleared up, but they were not doctrinal ones; most of them referred to Sally.

At eleven o'clock, Sally and Irene Spinks strolled down the village towards the Rev. Arthur's house in their customary guileless manner. There was a brighter colour than usual in Sally's cheeks, whilst Irene's eyes fairly danced with mischief. But, contrary to their usual practice, the two young girls halted before Old Man's shanty, and intimated a desire for five minutes' private conversation with him.

Old Man was as much gratified as if he had not been expecting this visit for some days past.

"Seein' as I'm a bachelord," he said, "I ain't got no fancy fixin's about, but Ikey was foolin' round with a broom yesterday, an' raised a considerable dust, so it's pretty tidy."

Old Man's somewhat primitive ideas of tidiness caused Irene to sniff with disdain. A few iron pots and pans were collected round the cooking-stove, whilst a box-bed in the corner also served as a settee in the daytime. The walls were hung with deer-horns; there was a rifle standing handily against the stove; and pinned up between the antlers over the door was a rude yet unmistakable portrait of Ikey, cut out in black paper by the scissors of some wandering artist. A stool stood on each side of the stove for the accommodation of the two friends, and that was all. Old Man disliked having his room "cluttered up" with superfluous furniture.

He hospitably brought forward the two stools for the girls.

"I've some mighty fine honey, such as you don't often git," he said.

The two girls declined the honey and were mutely wondering how to break the object of their visit to Old Man when a shadow darkened the doorway and Ikey's sandy head appeared.

"I didn't know as there was a reception goin' on in here," he said, facetiously, "seein' as I ain't had no kyard."

Sally looked at him perplexedly.

"I don't know whether I can trust you, Ikey," she said. "You're such a bloodthirsty old savage, always wanting to kill somebody."

"I fires when Old Man fires," said Ikey, sententiously.

Old Man motioned Ikey to come in.

"I'll be answerable for Ikey," he said, cheerfully. "I've a sort of a notion you wants to git married, Sally."

Ikey looked disappointed.

"I don't hold with this yer marryin' of foreigners," he said, severely, "when thar's lots of likely young chaps round here."

"You shet up," said Old Man, with an admonitory kick. "Who's talkin' of marryin' foreigners?"

"Why, Sally," said Ikey, looking from one to the other. "Unless," he added, perplexedly, "mebbe it's Irene."

He was surprised to find Irene become crimson—a crimson so vivid that it temporarily obscured all her freckles.

Old Man motioned to him to be silent. "I've a sorter notion, Ikey," he said, "as Sally's a-goin' to marry Pete Harrison, an' wants us to give her away." Then he began to laugh silently.

"Won't one of the Four Corners fellers do?" asked Ikey, dubiously; "an' how's she goin' to git away to 'The Hill' afote the party? We was relyin' on you considerable," he added reproachfully to Sally, "seein' as how you wanted the dance. Old Man's got his new store clothes, an' is pinin' to show off in 'em. He's dressful vain, is Old Man, when he makes up his mind thar's widows about."

Old Man grinned amiably at this allusion to widows. "She's a-goin' to marry Pete Harrison," he said, with a wave of his pipe in the direction of Sally; "she's a-goin' to marry the Parson," with another wave towards the blushing Irene, whose angry denial died away upon her lips, in astonishment; "an' mebbe, we'll have to be present at the weddin' to look after the young couple."

Ikey grinned. "If we was to show our noses at the weddin', 'The Hill' folk'd make it lively for us."

"Yes; if they was to see it," rejoined Old Man, enjoying Ikey's perplexity. "Look thar, you sawdust-headed coon." He pointed with his pipe in the direction of the Parson's house. "Pete's in thar, an' Sally wants us to go down to witness this yer ceremony, an' have our guns handy in case of interruptions. I'll give her away, you kin be best man."

"Oh, if thar's any fightin'," said Ikey, reaching for Old Man's rifle, with a smile of content, "it's all right."

"What a pesky idjeot it is!" said Old Man, testily. "Who said thar'd be any fightin'? We're goin' to see the weddin's all fair an' square, as old friends of the bride. When the ceremony's taken place, the bridegroom'll put out quicker'n lightnin' for his friends at 'The Hill'; if he's a wise man," concluded Old Man significantly, "he'll stop thar till the dance is over."

Sally did not waste time in endeavouring to arrive at an understanding as to how Old Man knew so much. His speech only confirmed her previous belief in him. She had played about his knee as a child, and he was not, to adopt his own expressive phraseology, "goin' back on her." Besides, she was picturing to herself the consequences which might arise from her wedding a "Hill" man; whether they would work for good or evil, whether the feud would stop or develop—whether—

"You jest leave it to me, Sally," said Old Man, laying his rough, gnarled fingers softly on the girl's shining hair. "Ikey an' me'll put you through all right."

"I fires when Old Man fires," repeated Ikey, as if there were nothing more to be said.

"What time's bin fixed for this interestin' occasion?" asked Old Man, presently

"Half-past eleven," said Irene. "It's about eleven now."

Ikey grinned. "You didn't waste much time in comin' to the point," he said. "It'll take me all I kin do to git washed an' cleaned up for this yer solemn occasion."

Old Man looked at him in disgust

"Listen to him an' his washin'," he said. "Nice sort of man he is to go washin' himself. If you was to alter like that, Ikey, you couldn't go five yards 'ithout folk suspectin' somethin' was up. Wash your hands if you like; that won't make much difference. Folk might notice it an' think you was house-cleanin', or gittin' married yourself. It's a risk, but you kin do it if you like."

Ikey was disappointed and showed it.

"Not havin' bin a best man at a weddin'," he said, reluctantly, "I'd a kind of idea them new clothes of mine for the dance 'ud come in handy an' deferential-like, though not so good for fightin' in; but if Sally don't mind I'll jest comb my hair a bit an' slip down to the Parson's permiskus like."

"Now yer showin' some sense," returned Old Man. "We'll be along, Sally, as soon as you've cleared out."

As they went down the street, Constable Wrong came to the door and surveyed the girls with a gratified look. He was immensely tickled at this prospective rise in the social scale for himself and family. Sally experienced a sudden feeling of faintness when he waved a paternal, yet gritty, hand in their direction. Irene also gave a little hysterical gasp.

"If he only knew what was going to happen," she said, "he wouldn't look so pleased."

Sally's courage began to fail her. She hurried on with a terrified air, which only disappeared at the sight of Pete's grave face in the passage. The next moment she was in his arms crying softly, whilst the Reverend Arthur went into the kitchen with Irene in order that she might have time to recover herself.

Presently, Ikey dropped in, followed at a discreet distance by Old Man, who thought it consistent with his assumed character of an unexpected visitor to lounge over the Parson's railings and smoke with the grave deliberation of a Red Indian.

"If he don't come in soon," declared the exasperated and expectant bridegroom, "I'll go out an' drag him by the scruff of his neck."

But when Old Man at length appeared, his demeanour signified still further that the situation was one which demanded a becoming gravity. He shook hands laboriously all round, as if he had never seen any of them for weeks, and even arranged the grouping of the young couple, standing back critically to watch the effect. Suddenly, Irene, who stood behind Sally, gave a little cry.

"We've forgotten the ring. It won't be legal without a ring."

But Old Man was equal to the emergency. There were not going to be any mistakes about marriages in which he had a hand. He produced a little buck-skin bag from his pocket, opened it, and there lay a rather heavy ring, moulded out of virgin gold.

quietly uttered the responses assigned to her, oblivious of Old Man's gentle prompting. With the thoroughness which characterised all that worthy's proceedings, he repeated most of the service after the Rev. Arthur in a manner which filled Ikey with admiration, and more than ever confirmed his belief that as a theologian Old Man would have



"PETE STOOD GAZING INTO THE EYES OF HIS BRIDE"

"I was sorter savin' this up for Ikey," he said seriously; "but, seein' as how he can't make up his mind about the widow, he's lost his chance."

The Reverend Arthur stood behind a little table on which Irene had placed a glass containing a few red and white roses. Pete, a trifle pale and weak, but resolute, handsome, and determined, stood looking into the eyes of his bride, who

been a distinct success. Ikey contented himself with throwing in an occasional "That's so" to the Rev. Arthur's little homily after the service was over. Irene and the housekeeper wept with pleasurable excitement at intervals throughout the service. Most women seem to regard weddings as solemn occasions on which it would be impious to refrain from exhibiting their sorrow. Their manner

also implies that the Minotaur's descendants still ravage the earth in search of victims, feminine ones always, and that it is only meet floods of tears should flow to Heaven in mute protest against man's barbarity. When this time-honoured formality had been accomplished, everyone felt better and the ceremony was pronounced complete and final.

There was a pleasantly informal little meal afterwards. Strange to say, Pete and the bride ate nothing. Ikey, although somewhat embarrassed by the cleanliness of the white cloth which covered the table, and a troubled sense that it was not etiquette to put his knife in his mouth, still retained sufficient presence of mind to make a hearty meal, though lost in admiration at the way Old Man comported himself. Then the two ancient friends slipped out of the house, after promising to return at midnight and see the bridegroom safely through the village.

Constable Wrong was much annoyed at having to wait for his dinner, but dissembled his wrath when thinking of the future.

"I s'pose," he remarked, jocularly, "you can't tell me what you've been doin' this mornin'. You an' the Parson must have a good many things to talk about. Why, who gave you that ring?"

"Old Man gave me the ring," said Sally, ingeniously. "He was saving it up for Ikey; and as Ikey doesn't seem able to use it, he gave it to me instead."

Constable Wrong was puzzled, but as there was no immediate solution of this unheard-of generosity on Old Man's part, he went in to dinner.

CHAPTER IX.

MISS MELINDA MATHEWS.

To the surprise of everyone at the Four Corners, nothing more came of "The Hill" men's vaunts. On more than one occasion they suffered opportunities for bloodshed to pass them by in a way which filled Ikey and Old Man with wonder, until they bethought themselves that it might be owing to Pete's influence over his friends. To people who knew nothing about Pete's reasons for wishing to hush up the whole

matter, it seemed as if "The Hill" men had lost all "sand." But the members of the Dance Committee were so busy in their efforts to make the forthcoming ball a success, that they had little time to waste on speculations as to what would be the ultimate end of this promising feud. Their one object in life was to make "The Hill" men green with envy, and this, according to rumour, they had already amply succeeded in doing.

The long, low building of wood, known for some inexplicable reason as "The Institute," stood a little way back from the Four Corners main road, in what had once been a garden, but was now a mere thicket of young trees and overgrown bushes. Torches stuck on barrels at the entrance shed a somewhat smoky light upon the scene. Contrary to the custom of other countries on occasions of this kind, each guest was bidden to produce the ticket entitling him or her to participate in the Terpsichorean revelry about to commence. Inside "The Institute" the arrangements were characterised by what the *Four Corners Gazette* enthusiastically termed "an almost regal splendour, tempered with classic severity." The men deposited their hats in convenient corners, but a cloak-room had been provided for the ladies, where "Mrs. Mat Perkins, a star amid a galaxy of stars" (the *Gazette* again) "received her fair sisters on behalf of the Committee. 'Music arose with its voluptuous swell' in the shape of a special band hired from Ottawa for the occasion. 'A thousand hearts (or, to be more precise, two hundred and nine) beat happily,' and when the members of the Committee (those who were not doing Vigilant duty at the door to keep out anticipated intruders from 'The Hill') appeared in all the glory of clawhammers, with red rosettes in their button-holes (we may mention *en passant* that the ribbon for this purpose was provided by our gifted and generous Sheriff, and made up into badges by the nimble fingers of Miss Irene Spinks) one vast, sustained, voluminous, soul-stirring cheer rang through the building and spread with reverberate echo into the night to drown the river's feeble roar."

Even Old Man forgot the discomfort involved in wearing "store clothes," and beamed benignantly on his friends as they entered "The Institute." This benignity, however, did not prevent him from scrutinising very sharply the faces of strangers when they came through the entrance. Old Man had been rather puzzled by Mrs. Pete Harrison's urgent request the day after her wedding for a ticket for an old school friend of hers, one Melinda Mathews, of Stanismore County, a place which was only two hundred miles away, and, therefore, well within visiting range of the Four Corners. It was ten years since Melinda had honoured the village with her presence. Old Man (he had a dim remembrance of her as a long, lank girl, all arms and legs) fairly gasped with astonishment to see this magnificently handsome young woman. "Why, M'linda," he said in gratified accents, as he shook hands, "I shouldn't have known you if so be as Sally hadn't let on she wanted a ticket for you. Your voice though is kind of familiar like, but it puzzles me how you slim little gals do grow into such bouncin' young women. It's one of the Lord's mysteries (Old Man always became more pious than usual when he had cleared his somewhat blurred vision with "tanglefoot"), an' so are most womenfolk; I never could understand 'em myself. I reckon you'll make some of the boys sit up."

Miss Mathews, however, in lieu of expressing with feminine ease and volubility the intense pleasure it gave her to see Old Man thus disporting himself, blushed up to the eyes and bowed somewhat awkwardly.

Old Man was rather embarrassed by this chilly reception of his well-meant efforts to be gracious, but came to the conclusion that etiquette forbade any approach to the familiarities of everyday life. Not to be outdone by a comparative stranger, he bowed in a manner which nearly made his back creak and seemed to afford Miss Mathews much stifled amusement, for she half-swallowed a dainty lace handkerchief in an effort not to betray her mirth.

"Sorter stand offish, ain't she?" Old Man whispered to Sally.

"She's a most surprising girl," Sally declared with conviction. "If you knew all about her, you'd be far more astonished than you are now."

"Heaven forbid, an' all the waters under the yearth forbid too," said Old Man, with a hazy conviction that he was quoting from somewhere. "Thar's a man comin' over thar, an' I disremember ever seein' him afore. It war a lucky thing," he added, joyously—"It war a lucky thing when I had these store clothes I got the tailor to put in a revolver pocket. Seems as if the boys felt low an' wanted somethin' to cheer 'em up."

Sally turned pale as Old Man moved away; then the lovely tide of colour flowed back to her cheek. Her admirers declared that she had never looked more beautiful. Relying on the vigilance of the Committee, none of the younger members of the community had come armed. "The Hill" challenge was supposed to have been a game of bluff and nothing more. When this dawned upon the editor of the *Four Corners Gazette*, he retired into a corner and furtively wrote adjectives down on his cuffs to figure with appropriate allusions to "The Hill" challenge in his Saturday's leader. As he wrote down the burning words, the leader gradually assumed in his mind a shape which should cause it to be remembered for many years. From time to time he punctuated the adjectives with whisky, and the result became more and more illegible with every passing hour.

As the evening wore on, it was noticed that Miss Mathews danced very little; for the most part she sat somewhat shyly in a corner, or conversed in whispers with Sally when that festive young lady was not dancing. Mrs. Mat Perkins found her overtures treated with evident coolness, and let Miss Mathews severely alone, after one or two attempts to make things pleasant for her. "Your swan's a goose, and a pretty big one," she said to Sally, as they met in the Lancers.

Sally tossed her head indignantly. "There's a good deal more in her than you think," she cried, eagerly.

"The creature's thirty inches round the waist," said Mrs. Mat when they next touched hands in the Ladies' Chain.

"You ought to be twenty-four at least, instead of sixteen," angrily retorted Sally; and they did not speak as they passed by.

At supper there was the same evident disinclination on Miss Melinda's part to attract attention. The admirer who had brought her to the table noted her huge appetite with awe, and that she evinced a somewhat unladylike preference for champagne in lieu of lemonade, for cold beef and salad instead of chicken. Young Pat O'Brian sat next to Sally and hilariously proffered her a cracker to pull. He had no eyes for Miss Melinda at all.

"Excuse my left hand, Mr. O'Brian," said Sally; "it's easier this way."

She drew off her glove as she spoke, and laid it carelessly on the table. O'Brian gave a little start of surprise.

"When did you get married, Miss Wrong?" he asked quizzically. "You're wearing a wedding ring to-night;" and he pointed to Old Man's gift.

Sally turned as white as death, then laughed. "Guess you're enough to frighten anyone, Mr. O'Brian," she said somewhat pettishly. "When a girl gets married she ought to know of it, and not have it broken to her so suddenly."

"But I thought——"

"This was Old Man's ring," said Sally, composedly. "He gave it me. Sit still, Melinda, and don't fidget. I had to wear some jewellery to-night to match your diamond ring, Mr. O'Brian."

Pat O'Brian looked pleased and forgot to pay the slightest attention to Melinda, who glared at him in a singularly unladylike fashion. Sally, however, immediately devoted herself to Pat, and made him tell her a long story of the holding up by Denver Pete of "The Hill" coach last spring, and how not a man in the coach dared cope with that popular desperado. When he had finished the story he again noticed how pale Sally looked, for it now suddenly dawned upon her that a plan conceived in a frolicsome mood might have very serious conse-

quences. She noticed Pat O'Brian go out to the porch and confer with Old Man, whose countenance suddenly assumed a very lugubrious aspect indeed. Old Man came back with him into the supper room just as Sally and Miss Mathews rose from the table. Miss Mathews found Old Man's keen eyes fixed sternly upon her.

"You'd better git out quietly into the porch," he said to that young lady; "if the boys tumble to you, that's sure to be trouble. I can't spend all my time in gittin' you out of mischief."

Miss Mathews laughed.

"Seems to me," she retorted, "now I am here, you might just as well be civil. I'm sure I've behaved very well."

"I misdoubted you when you began to freeze me off," said Old Man. "If you've got any plan you'd better think it out quick. The folk is gittin' suspicious."

Pat O'Brian looked on in amazement, then stretched out his hand towards Miss Mathews as if to take that fascinating young lady by the throat.

With a quick gesture, Miss Mathews put her hand to that part of her body where, had she been a man, it would have touched a revolver.

"Confound it all, Sally," she cried, in decidedly masculine tones, "I knew I'd never be able to find that pocket in a hurry. Some one'll git the drop on me."

Constable Wrong came hopping up to the table, and Sally realised that she must take action at once. Already an ominous whisper ran round the room that there was something queer about Miss Mathews. Four Corners girls were not accustomed to indulge in Chesterfieldian elegance of diction, but their voices, at least, were free from the suspicion of masculinity.

Sally hesitated a moment.

"Her father's blood before her father's face,
"Boiled up and proved her truly of his race."

She whipped the revolver out of his hand, and levelled it at Pat O'Brian, whose eyes had assumed a very ominous expression.

"Stand back!" she cried fiercely.

"Stand back! or there'll be one Irishman the less in this room."

Then, with feminine inconsistency, she trembled and began to laugh.

Pete Harrison, seeing that further disguise was useless, endeavoured to persuade Sally to lower the revolver. But she refused to do so, and, greatly to the astonishment of everybody, the supposed Miss Mathews tore off her wig with a genial smile.

"I reckon we've kept our word, boys," she said to the assembled guests, disclosing the unabashed features of Pete Harrison. "We told you we'd send somebody down to put a little tone into this affair. I guess we've done it. Someone might rip this dress open; 'twas mighty hard to git into."

Old Man looked at him.

"Hard to git into," he said, in a voice which he endeavoured to render stern for the sake of appearances. "You may find it a little harder to git out than it was to git in. If I disremember rightly, you'd got to marry someone down here as well."

He looked round him, then chuckled.

"P'raps," he said, "Mr. Pete Harrison Esquire, you'll pint out the lady who's fool enough to leave Four Corners for 'The Hill.' If you can't, you'll find yourself ridin' a rail, an' them elegant fixins of yours purtected from the weather with a coat of tar an' feathers. All you've got to do is to pint out the young lady, an' we'll let you off an' 'pologise to 'The Hill' folk. Whar is she?"

He winked furtively at Sally.

"Whar is she, I say?"

"Here," said Sally, dropping the revolver. It went off with a bang, the bullet ploughing a hole in the boards between her father's feet. "We were married a few days ago by the Reverend Arthur Dacre."

Pat O'Brian gave a groan. This was the reason why Sally wore a wedding ring and accounted for its presence with only a half truth; she had omitted to explain how it was that Old Man's ring come to be used at her own wedding, Pete having forgotten to provide one for the occasion.

Constable Wrong capered about the room in an ecstasy of rage.

"Shoot the head off him," he yelled. "Shoot the head off him. I disown you, Sally, you ondutiful girl you."

The Reverend Arthur came up at this moment with Irene on his arm. He and his freckled *fiancée* had danced down every other couple in the room and were elated with victory.

"It is time all this foolish squabbling came to an end," he said, with impressive dignity.

There was a shout of derision from the men. "We thought you was practisin' your shootin' to lead us up agin the Amalakites," cried someone, disappointedly.

"If thar's any shootin' to be done, we're the folk to do it," said a manly voice at the door. "I've a hundred fellers with me from 'The Hill.' If you touch our man thar'll be considerable trouble."

Old Man's eyes twinkled again, and he did not seem to be in the least surprised.

"They've got us, boys, like rats in a hole," he said. "We'd better square the matter afore it goes further."

Pete Harrison sprang up on a chair, still holding his wig in one hand, and motioned with it for silence.

"I'm not much of a word-slinger," he declared, with characteristic modesty; "I'm not much of a word-slinger, but I guess it's about time all this yer foolishness was put an end to: We've bin carvin' each other's throats till thar ain't many more left to cut. Me an' my wife here made up our minds this thing ought to be settled." He bent down and whispered to Sally, who nodded an affirmative. "The only way to do it," he continued, "is for this yer Committee to invite in all them fellers outside an' make a night of it. They'll come in, anyhow, so you'd better ask 'em."

A loud cheer shook the rafters at this unexpected proposal. Revolvers were piled in a corner, the doors thrown open, and "The Hill" men did ample justice to the remains of the supper. Then they began to dance with characteristic vigour, and kept it up till daybreak. The dance did more to wipe out past misunder-

standings than any other plan which could have been devised; in fact, several of "The Hill" men were heard to emphatically declare that if Chilvey Jake could come to life again he deserved to be lynched, if only as a warning not to cause ill-feeling between friends and neighbours. The Rev. Arthur, too, did his best to cement the newly-formed alliance, and blushingly received the compliments of "The Hill" men on the skill with which he had unwittingly slaughtered Old Man's goat.

Just before the party broke up, Ikey and Old Man were observed to be conferring with their unbidden guests, and, to quote the eloquent words of the *Four Corners Gazette*, "An appropriate end to

this sanguinary blood-feud which has so long raged between our impulsive fellow-citizens and 'The Hill' men culminated in a magnificent torchlight procession, in honour of Mr. and Mrs. Pete Harrison, to the house of that zealous pioneer of our liberties, Constable Wrong, where the young couple intend to reside until their new home shall have sprung up from the forest primeval."

Pete afterwards declared that had he known what tortures awaited him in feminine garb, he would never have dared to carry out his little plot; but Sally tells him he never looked better in his life than when, clad in a ball dress of light blue and a fair wig, he took the floor at the Four Corners Dance.



Sir Edward J. Harland, Bt., *and Belfast.*

By J. A. STEUART.

ACCORDING to Mr. Ruskin, travelling becomes dull in exact proportion to its rapidity. "Going by railroad," he adds, with his refreshing candour and contempt for material progress, "I do not consider travelling at all; it is merely 'being sent' to a place, and very little different from being a parcel." The Merovingian kings, riding gloriously in their bullock-carts, were luckier and happier than we moderns are with our express trains and luxurious Pullman cars.

It is the privilege, I had almost said the prerogative of genius, to indulge foibles. But eloquent preaching and romantic theorising, when based upon an ideal gospel of art, are scarcely likely to induce those who are under the evil spell of railways to return to the picturesque bullock-cart, or even to the magnificent stage coach, which, as the reader remembers, drew pictorial panegyrics from De Quincey and George Eliot. The world, in these days, loves speed, comfort and a good bank account. It has a surprising knack of making old things obsolete, and is wont to plume itself on its new and wonderful discoveries. So that for good or ill the day of the bullock-cart is over. That fascinating vehicle is now relegated to the romancer and antiquarian; and the average person knows it is no more for ever.

Fifty years ago Mr. Titmarsh, visiting Ireland, went to Holyhead in great glory by the Birmingham mail coach. He was ten hours on the box-seat, and presumably had ample opportunity to admire scenic splendours. Yet it is of his importunate appetite, and not of grand and impressive scenery we hear. He grumbled because the steward of the Kingston packet could give him nothing better to eat than half a dozen fried eggs, "a feeble make-shift for dinner."

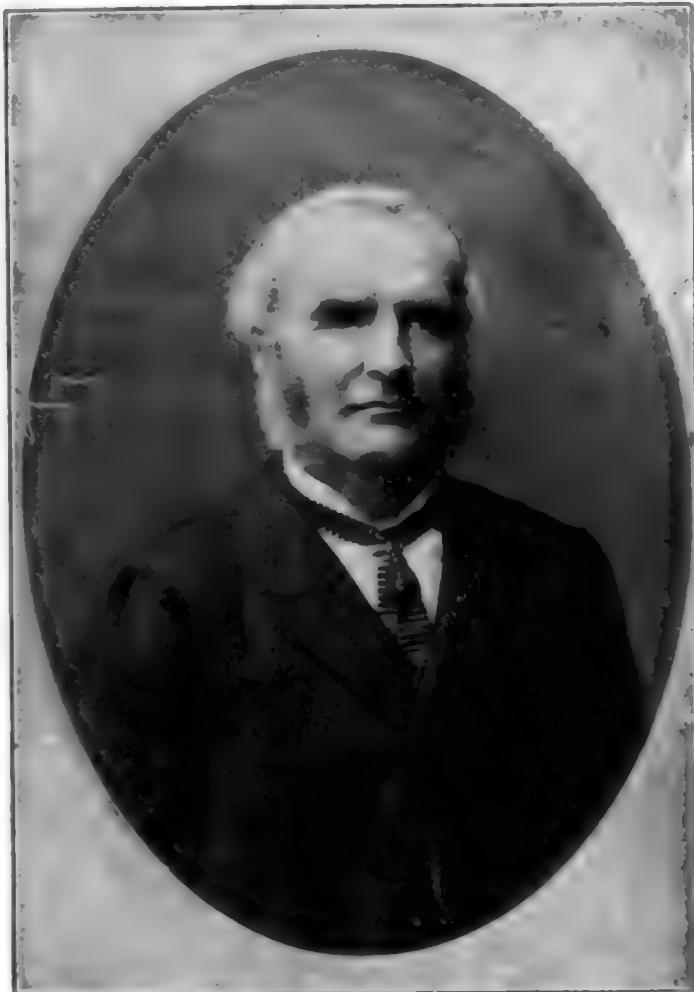
Nous avons changé tout cela. The traveller to Ireland no longer goes hungry from a box-seat to a lean ship's larder. Men of resource and enterprise have made the most elaborate and admirable arrangements alike for his comfort and his appetite. He takes a corridor train at Euston, makes himself snug in a deliciously upholstered corner, or, if desiring to dine, steps into a dining-room on wheels, and, doing his mile a minute, thinks genially of the inventive genius that has made railway travelling not merely easy, but luxurious and as expeditious as the wind. He steps from the train to "a floating palace," having the cuisine of a first-rate hotel, and lands next morning, if he be anything of a sailor, refreshed and fit for whatever business or pleasure fortune may have in store for him. This, it must be owned, is a step in advance of the modes of the Merovingian kings.

The great corporation, which has its headquarters at Euston, pays special attention to Irish traffic and affords facilities and conveniences to passengers not surpassed by any line in England. It will take charge of you in London and land you in Dublin or Belfast, generally, not only without hitch or accident, but with a comfort that scarcely leaves anything to be desired. For the London and North-Western Railway has the very latest improvements in means of transportation. Happily the corridor train, the dining and sleeping cars are now "fixed institutions" in England, and on the London and North-Western system will be found in their perfection.

Moreover, in its course to Holyhead, Fleetwood or Liverpool it traverses some of the most attractive scenery in England. The last time I travelled by it was *via* Fleetwood to Belfast, returning by Larne and Stranraer to catch the corridor train at

Carlisle, a circular tour I heartily commend to those seeking at once a glimpse of the best part of the Emerald Isle and a pleasant variation in route.

Ireland has been very much to the front for a number of years, yet it is questionable whether the English people have any clear idea of its condition, appearance or prospects. Many, I know, imagine that the Irishman and his pig partake of buttermilk and potatoes together, and have their beds in adjoining apartments. There is an impression also that Paddy drinks jugfuls of whisky, carries a shillelagh, sports knee breeches and a ragged blue coat, with brass buttons, and steadfastly declines either to work or pay rent. Nothing would more effectually dispel this imaginative and erroneous notion than a visit to the capital of Ulster. "Ah, Belfast," you say; "noted for Orange and Catholic riots, is it not?" Unluckily, yes; yet these do not constitute its sole claim to notice. On each recurring 12th of July (day of glorious and immortal memories!) it lays business aside, turns into the street with a few fifes, many drums, heaps of cobble stones, and, in defiance of law and order, proceeds to enjoy itself. For perhaps two days, or if the fever of excitement be great, intermittently for a week the sport continues; then the red-coats stroll out with fixed bayonets to enforce, the wishes of their friends, the "Peelers," reasonable citizens return to their houses, a few gay and festive blades, who insist on carrying the fun too far, are haled before the resident magistrate



SIR EDWARD J. HARLAND, BART.

and suitably admonished: and Belfast resumes work with renewed ardour and an unimpeachable demeanour.

Outside, these riots have given it an evil reputation; but those who are in a position to understand matters know that they are but the diversions of an eminently hard-headed, sober and successful commercial city. For though Belfast is in Ireland, and, what is more, in the "black north," its prosperity is marked and substantial. No city in the empire has a

shrewder sense of what is good for it financially and morally than the capital of Ulster, nor more unswerving energy in accomplishing its aims. Its industries are many; some of them are famous, and a few unique. It is celebrated the world over for its linen, its whisky, its ham, its tobacco and its shipbuilding; but chiefly in these latter years for its shipbuilding.

You will find Belfast linen, Belfast bacon, Belfast tobacco and Belfast whisky wherever "the blessings of civilisation" are known and appreciated. But you will find Belfast ships on the uttermost shores of the earth, where civilisation and its blessings are as yet but a dream. She is a great artificer in steel and iron; she has engineers and shipbuilders of renown; and her iron walls, more perdurable than the wooden ones that were once the boast of England, go into all waters over which the flag of our country floats.

There was a time, not long ago either, when the Clyde was supreme in shipbuilding; nor is it yet to be mentioned

with contempt. "Clyde-built" is still a descriptive epithet that ranks A 1 at Lloyd's; and I for one hope it may be many generations ere the glory depart from the foul and muddy river of St. Mungo. It was on the Clyde that steam was first used in Europe for the propulsion of ships; and for many a momentous year its prestige was undisputed. It still reigns, but it no longer reigns alone. In a quite unexpected quarter a successful rival has arisen.

We hear much of the ruined industries of Ireland. Like her round towers, they are made

the subject of sentimental regrets and manifold speculations. One who wishes to see the devastation and desolation of the country must keep away from Belfast; for, so far as I have been able to discover, it has no ruined industries. On the contrary, its commerce is very much alive indeed.

Shipbuilding, as I have said, takes the lead. We hear with increasing frequency of the launch of palatial steamers from the yard of Messrs. Harland and Wolff, and the public is no longer surprised when one after another of these vessels breaks the Atlantic record. To put the matter concretely, let us indulge in a few particulars.

Harland and Wolff's works are, to begin with, the largest of their kind in the world. Fix that fact in your memory, please, for Belfast is justly proud of it and pardonably fond of referring to it. The works have thirteen slips, employ close upon ten thousand hands, to whom £14,000 a-week



LADY HARLAND.

are paid in wages. The yard covers some eighty acres, and when I visited it, by the kind permission of Sir Edward Harland and his partners, there were in the adjoining basin two White Star liners—one the *Civic* (the largest cargo ship afloat) for the Atlantic trade, the other the *Gothic*, a first-class passenger and mail boat for the New Zealand Service—a Warren liner, two vessels for the Pacific Steam Navigation Co., two Hamburg American liners, a large steamer for Messrs. E. Bates and Sons, a first-class passenger ship (sister to the *Shropshire*) for Messrs.

Bibby Bros. and Co. of Liverpool, a large mail steamer for the Union Steamship Co. and an eight-thousand-ton ship for Messrs. William Johnston and Co., Liverpool, besides various other vessels under repair or in course of construction. If the reader will be so good as to study that brief paragraph, he will find that it means much more than appears on a casual reading. Quite recently the *Gothic* was on view in the Thames, and it is the largest vessel that ever entered the port of London, the *Great Eastern* alone excepted. She has the best accommodation for passengers, and a cargo carrying capacity for seventy-five thousand carcasses of sheep in refrigerated chambers. Her gross tonnage is seven thousand two hundred and twenty tons.

The establishment on Queen's Island comprises premises and plant not merely for building ships but for all the engineering necessary to equip them for sea. A



CASTLE PLACE, BELFAST.

visit to the works is an experience to be remembered for a life-time, and perhaps gives as vivid and surprising an idea of the industrial enterprise and ingenuity of our age as any single spot on the globe. When we admire the graceful lines and huge, well-balanced proportions of one of the big Atlantic liners we have, as a rule, little idea of what is involved in her construction, from the lay-

ing of the first plank to the last touch of polish or paint. The herculean labour, the multiplicity of detail, the vast power and delicate skill, can be appreciated only by seeing the ten thousand men and their manifold appliances at work. Sailing up Belfast Lough you hear the din of hammer and chisel long before you see the rising hulk in its



THE BELFAST MUSEUM.



HIGH STREET, BELFAST.

forest of poles; but you must get inside to the acres upon acres of workshops, to the roaring forges and the crash of "Titanian hammer strokes," to form any adequate idea of what is going on, or to appreciate the incalculable potency of machinery. There you will find Vulcan and the Cyclops in their chosen home.



MR. G. W. WOLFF, M.P.

Fires gleam red and fierce at every turn, molten metal flows in streams as if ore gushed like water; anvils ring; solid bars of iron and steel are cut as a sempstress cuts her thread, or sliced as you would slice an apple with a penknife; thick plates and sheets are punched into holes as at a touch; bars are planed and turned and polished, the whole to be fashioned into "glittering cylinders and timely respondent valves and fine-ribbed rods, which touch each other as a serpent writhes in noiseless gliding and omnipotence of grasp: infinitely complex anatomy of active steel, compared with which the skeleton of a living creature would seem to a careless observer clumsy and vile—a mere morbid secretion and phosphatous prop of flesh." Shavings and clippings of steel strew the floors, attesting the mighty pressure put upon the shears and planing machines; furnaces of gigantic size, and boilers (some of them weighing seventy tons apiece), and engine-sections of beautiful and delicate mould, are waiting to be fitted into the great frames outside; huge logs are sawn into planks while you look on; cabin fittings are being made and polished: in a word, mechanism, in its perfection, is employing all its resources

that you and I may go safely, easily and thoughtlessly from end to end of the earth. It takes some nine months to build a large steamer—that is to say, from the first line of drawing to the rub that gives the final polish.

And that vast establishment that seems to concentrate in itself the forces and facilities of the entire mechanical world is due to the ability, energy and foresight of one man. That man is Sir Edward J. Harland, M.P. Like so many of our industrial captains, he is "a self-made man," and his life is eloquent both in precept and example for the young. Born at Scarborough three score and four years ago, the son of a physician with a strong mechanical bent, he entered at fifteen the engineering works of Robert Stephenson and Co., of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Here the lad worked daily from 6 a.m. to 6.15 p.m., yet he found time for private study. His progress was remarkably rapid. At eighteen he was entrusted with the entire charge of erecting one side of a locomotive, and a year later he entered the drawing-office. Here also he distinguished himself. Robert Stephenson and Co. were builders of marine and large condensing engines and likewise undertook contracts for the erection of tubular



MR. JAMES MUSGRAVE,
Chairman of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners.

and other bridges. Their apprentices had thus varied opportunities, and young Harland seized all that came in his way.

At twenty, his apprenticeship being over, he became a journeyman, receiving the munificent wage of 20s. per week. In the same year, that is to say, in 1851, he came to London, where he spent some months examining machinery in the great exhibition. Soon afterwards he joined the firm of J. and G. Thomson, marine engineers of Glasgow, at the old wages of 20s. Here he was, so to speak, at the centre of things.

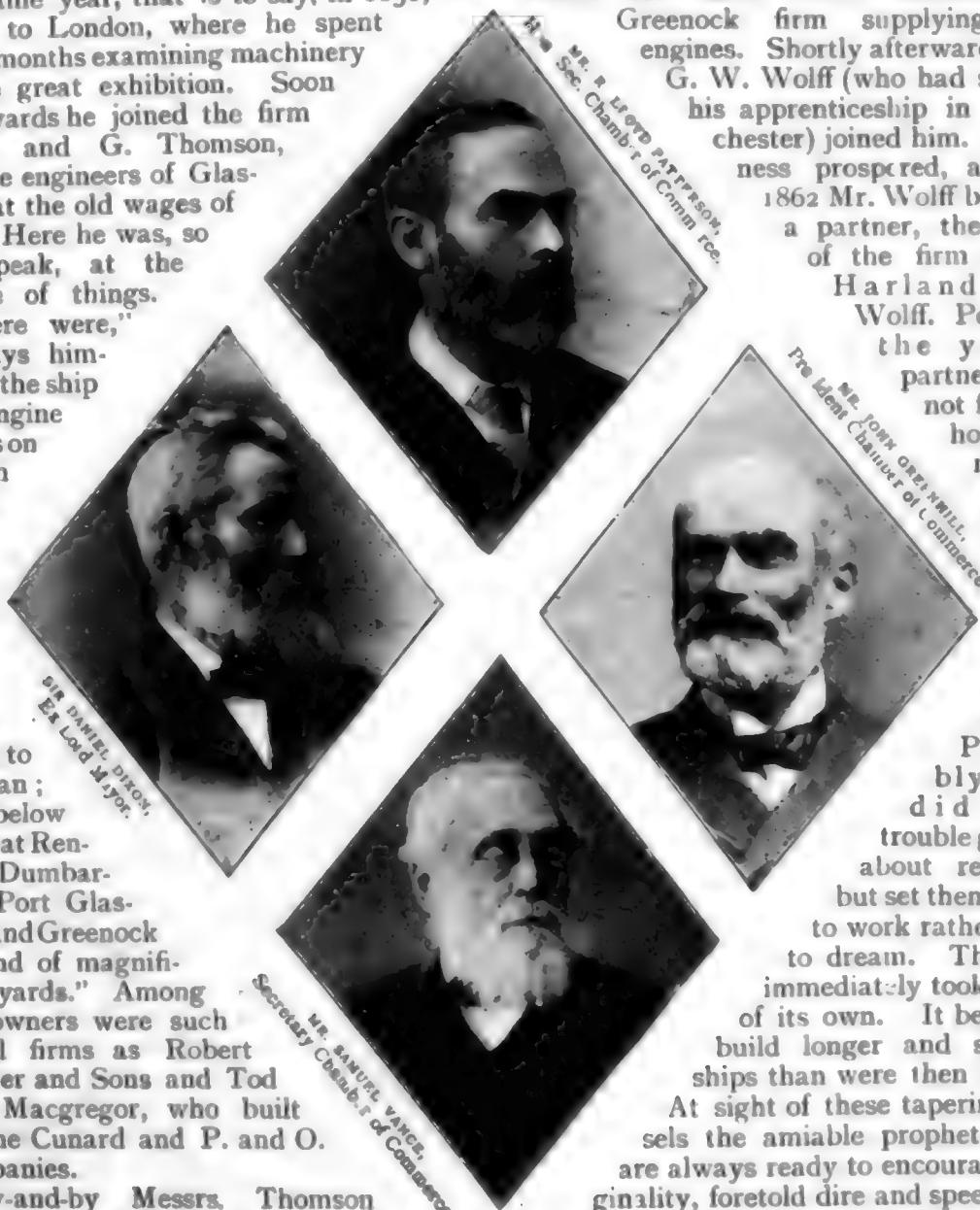
"There were," he says himself, "the ship and engine works on both sides of

the river down to Govan; and below thereat Renfrew, Dumbarton, Port Glasgow and Greenock no end of magnificent yards." Among the owners were such noted firms as Robert Napier and Sons and Tod and Macgregor, who built for the Cunard and P. and O. companies.

By-and-by Messrs. Thomson added shipbuilding to engineering and Mr. Harland became assistant to the principal naval draughtsman. In a short time the principal removed elsewhere and the assistant was promoted to his place. At the age of two-and-twenty Mr. Harland was appointed manager to Mr. Thomas Toward, a shipbuilder on the Tyne, and a year later migrated to Belfast as manager to Robert Hickson and Co. Things were not in a satisfactory condition

and the young manager had trouble with his workmen. But persevering, he succeeded so well that he bought out his employer, whose enterprise had not yielded encouraging results.

Very soon the youthful shipbuilder got orders for three screw steamers, a Greenock firm supplying the engines. Shortly afterwards Mr. G. W. Wolff (who had served his apprenticeship in Manchester) joined him. Business prospered, and in 1862 Mr. Wolff became a partner, the style of the firm being Harland and Wolff. Perhaps the young partners did not foresee how familiar their names



were to become.

Probably they did not trouble greatly about renown; but set themselves to work rather than to dream. The firm immediately took a line

of its own. It began to build longer and sharper ships than were then in use. At sight of these tapering ves-

sels the amiable prophets, who are always ready to encourage originality, foretold dire and speedy disasters. Superannuated salts on the Liverpool landing-stage declared the ships were too long, too sharp and would inevitably break their backs. They might go out of the Mersey but would never get back to it. It is not related whether those salts died of chagrin when they found their predictions utterly and wholly falsified.

The fact is Mr. Edward Harland had taken a hint from Nature. "Nature seems to have furnished us," he wrote

many years later, "with the finest design for a vessel in the form of the fish; it presents such fine lines, is so clean, so true and so rapid in its movements. The ship, however, must float, and to hit upon the happy medium of velocity and stability seems to me the art and mystery of shipbuilding." In order to secure large carrying capacity, the firm introduced flatness of bottom and squareness of bilge. This is known as the "Belfast bottom," and is now generally adopted.

In regard to length, the firm had to contend with the difficulty, in some cases the impossibility, in certain docks, of swinging vessels of any greater length than those already in use. To get over the obstacle,

was how to save fuel, and compound engines and boilers were introduced with the most satisfactory results. It may be mentioned, in passing, that the engines are now of the triple expansion inverted-cylinder marine type; occasionally they are of the quadruple expansion type, the cylinders being placed tandem, two above two. The usual pressure for triple engines is 175 to 180 lbs. on the square inch; a few have even 200 lbs. The boilers are all tested with water to double their working pressure before leaving the shop. Thirty years ago a pressure of 12 or 15 lbs. was considered high. What will the pressure be thirty years hence, when we shall go from Queenstown to New York in three days or less?



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF MESSRS. HARLAND AND WOLFF'S BUILDING YARD.

Messrs. Harland and Wolff proposed to do away with the old-fashioned cut-water and figure-head, with bowsprit and jibboom, and to adopt a perpendicular stem. The suggestion was tried, and proved entirely successful.

On the opening of the Suez Canal, the firm built three large steamers for the Australian trade; and so popular did the Belfast build become that, in 1869, Mr. T. H. Ismay commissioned Messrs. Harland and Wolff to construct six large steamers for the transatlantic trade; these were 400 feet keel, 41 feet beam and 32 feet hold; in other words, the young Belfast firm had worked a revolution in the shipbuilding trade.

An early point in regard to steamships

Another innovation introduced by Messrs. Harland and Wolff was the placing of the first-class accommodation amidships, thus avoiding the smells from the galleys. The first ship so fitted was the *Oceanic*, for the White Star Line, and both in build and machinery she became a model. Since then the firm has built many passenger steamers for the White Star and other lines. With the performances of the *Teutonic* and *Majestic* fresh in the public mind it would be superfluous to detail Messrs. Harland and Wolff's recent record. They are the first of existing shipbuilders, and promise to hold that proud position.

It should be added here that Sir Edward Harland still believes in sailing

ships. They are specially suited for the transport of heavy merchandise; the first cost is greatly less than that of steamers, and they are more economically handled. Messrs. Harland and Wolff have launched many big steel and iron sailing ships, and continue to build more.

The firm of Harland and Wolff now consists of Sir Edward J. Harland, Bart., M.P.; Mr. G. W. Wolff, M.P.; Mr. W. A. Wilson and Mr.

W. J. Pirrie. The junior partners have both worked up through all the departments, as the head of the firm puts it, "by dint of merit alone—by character, perseverance and ability." Sir Edward and Mr. Wolff both represent divisions of Belfast in Parliament and are prominently connected with the public life of the town. Sir Edward was Mayor of Belfast, and in that capacity entertained the Prince of Wales. Shortly afterwards, the Queen conferred a baronetcy upon him. He was also for some time Chairman of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners. In 1860, he married Miss Rosa Wann, of Wilmont, Belfast. Sir Edward and Lady Harland gave up their residence in Belfast some years ago, and now reside at Baroda House, Kensington Palace Gardens.

Let us now glance very briefly at the town and trade of Belfast generally. And first, as to the City's progress: I find that in 1791, the population was 18,320; in 1841, that is to say fifty years later, 75,308; and in 1891, 255,950. It is now considerably over 260,000. These figures indicate a wonderful increase in the course of a century. We cross the Atlantic and find marvels of growth in Chicago, New York, St. Louis, St. Paul and other places, but it would be manifestly unfair to compare the resources of America and of Ireland.



THE "TEUTONIC" IN DRY DOCK.

The prosperity of Belfast has kept steady pace with the increase of population. During the last thirty years the valuation of the city has risen from £270,000 to £750,000. Fifty years ago the funds at the disposal of the three local banks amounted to £1,488,134; now they have reached a total of £15,000,000. In 1837, the tonnage of vessels clearing from Belfast was 288,143; in 1892, it was 2,053,637 tons. The harbour receipts make up 39 per cent. of the total harbour receipts of Ireland, while the value of foreign and colonial imports 34 per cent. of the total belongs to Belfast; and the amount collected by the Customs and Inland Revenue in 1892 was £3,250,000. These items mean a commercial enterprise and success not commonly associated with Irish towns.

Let us indulge in a few more details. The largest shipbuilding yard in the world is, as I have said, on Queen's Island. Belfast has also the largest rope-works in the world, of which Mr. W. H. Smiles, a son of Dr. Smiles, is the managing director. Then, again, it is noted for its tobacco, its whisky, and, oddly enough, its ginger ale. I presume that most of my readers have heard of Gallaher's "Harlequin Flake," and of the various whiskies and aerated waters that are made in the Ulster capital. Gallaher and Co. pay some



QUEEN'S COLLEGE, BELFAST.

£10,000 a week duty on the raw material imported into Belfast alone. Think of it, ye puffers of the fragrant weed!

Again, who has not heard of Belfast linen. It is the best manufactured. I find that the number of hands employed in linen factories and flax spinning mills in Ireland is returned as follows: 1850, 21,121; 1871, 55,039; 1890, 64,475.

These figures apply almost entirely to Ulster; and, of course, by far the largest proportion belongs to Belfast. There must, in addition, be counted the hands that are employed in bleach-greens, dyeing and printing works and in scutch mills. The annual value of the linen trade of Ulster (again chiefly Belfast), is £5,444,000 for yarns, and for linens £5,872,000, making together £11,316,000. The cost of bleaching and finishing, with the value of the linen threads, would make up the total to at least £12,000,000. Do these figures indicate ruined industries?

The appearance of Belfast is in keeping with its prosperity. The principal streets are wide, the buildings at once substantial and handsome. Some of the newer thoroughfares, such as Royal Avenue, are exceptionally fine.

The town is likewise well situated in respect to holiday resorts. Down the lough are the watering-places of Holywood and Bangor; while the Antrim coast, which is unsurpassed in Great Britain for grandeur and variety of scenery, is within easy access. Again, if you choose to strike northward, the Belfast and Northern Counties Railway will take you to Coleraine, Portrush and Londonderry. Portrush is one of the most charming summer resorts in Ireland, and is noted for its golf links. Coleraine, as Thackeray remarked, is famous for linen and for Beautiful Kitty, whose "pitcher was tumbled, and all the sweet buttermilk watered the plain." The place is further noted for whisky, which, I understand, is consumed in considerable quantities by our legislators. The Belfast and Northern Counties Railway also controls the Larne and Stranraer route, on which the arrangements for passenger traffic are admirable, down to the smallest detail.

The writer of this article is specially indebted to Mr. John Greenhill, President of the Belfast Chamber of Commerce, and Mr. R. Lloyd Patterson, the Hon. Secretary, for information regarding the trade of the town.



LEAVES FROM THE BUSH.

By EDWIN HUGHES, B.A.

“**Y**ES, gold! in lumps, not suvrins. Ingots, don’t you call ‘em? and you needn’t ask how I came by ‘em, Mr. Morris. Just you write down that I leave the blessed lot to my son, Captain Jack Tredgett.”

I had no wish to pry into the secrets of my old client, who had come to me to make his will, but I confess I was astonished when he mentioned the weight and the nature of the property he had to leave.

“If I was a scholard, sir,” the old man went on, “I could tell you a yarn as to how I happened on to that mine as would knock the wind out of the sails of most yarns, but if you want to hear the story properly you’ll have to go a long way; fact is, you’d have to go to Australy.”

I put down my pen and looked at him. “That’s precisely and exactly where I am going, Mr. Tredgett,” I said.

“And what part may you be goin’ to?” he asked.

“Well, I’m going first to Tasmania—”

“Tasmania!” he cried out. “That’s the very spot. Lord sir, how I’d like to be goin’ with you. But, there, I’m too old for one thing, and for another, the missis wouldn’t let me go. I tell you what I’ll do. I’ll give you a letter to Harry Beresford, and he’ll show you over

the place better than any man in it. You must get away into the Bush with him, and if you can work round to his soft side, you’ll hear somethin’ worth listenin’ to. Just you try it on some night when the stars are blinkin’ down at you in your ‘possum rugs, and the winds are shakin’ the tree tops till you’d think they was singin’ a lullaby. Look here, Mr. Morris, I’d fling all them ingots into the sea if I could put back the clock and be mates again with Harry Beresford, and I reckon when you tell him that Joe Tredgett’s sent you to him, you’ll have the best there is to have of anythin’ he’s got.”

And this was how I came by the ill-spelt epistle that was to be the means of my gathering these “Leaves from the Bush.”

I had overdrawn very considerably on the bank of health, and it had been brought home to me very forcibly that the said bank is an establishment which comes down on its creditors like a sledge-hammer; and so, by the advice of my medical friends, I, Ronald Morris, solicitor, shut up my bachelor abode, and as a long sea voyage would probably pick me up better than anything else, I had taken passage in a sailing-ship to ‘Frisco, and from there to Tasmania, and would presently become one of those who go down to the sea in ships.

Nearly six months went by since we had left the shores of England before we sighted Cape Pillar, on the southern coast of Tasmania, and right glad was I to set foot again on *terra firma*, buffeted and beaten as we had been by the breezes and billows in our long stretch across the dreary southern ocean.

I had not come all these miles to "hang around Gov'mint House," as Joe Tredgett put it, so selecting his letter from the bundle of introductory epistles I had brought with me, I bought a useful hack, and a very few days after landing, set out for Bothwell.

It was summer time, halcyon days of sunshine and sea-breezes, and the wattle-blossom was flinging its perfume abroad on every wind, and the manna was whitening the ground under the tall trees, as I rode past the broad sweeps of the river Derwent and breasted Constitution Hill to catch a glimpse, as I reached the top, of the far away Table Mountain, standing out blue in the summer haze, and cutting the sky-line as sharply as though it had been levelled by some giant hand, and then, after the noonday rest, away over the Den Hill, and so down to the peaceful town-ship of Bothwell, beside the pleasant waters of the Clyde, there to meet with the welcome that awaits the stranger in that land of hospitality, a welcome all the heartier, if that could be, if he brings the letter that tells of a friend he has met at home in dear old England.

When I first saw him, Beresford was sitting in the shade of

the verandah that ran along the front of his house.

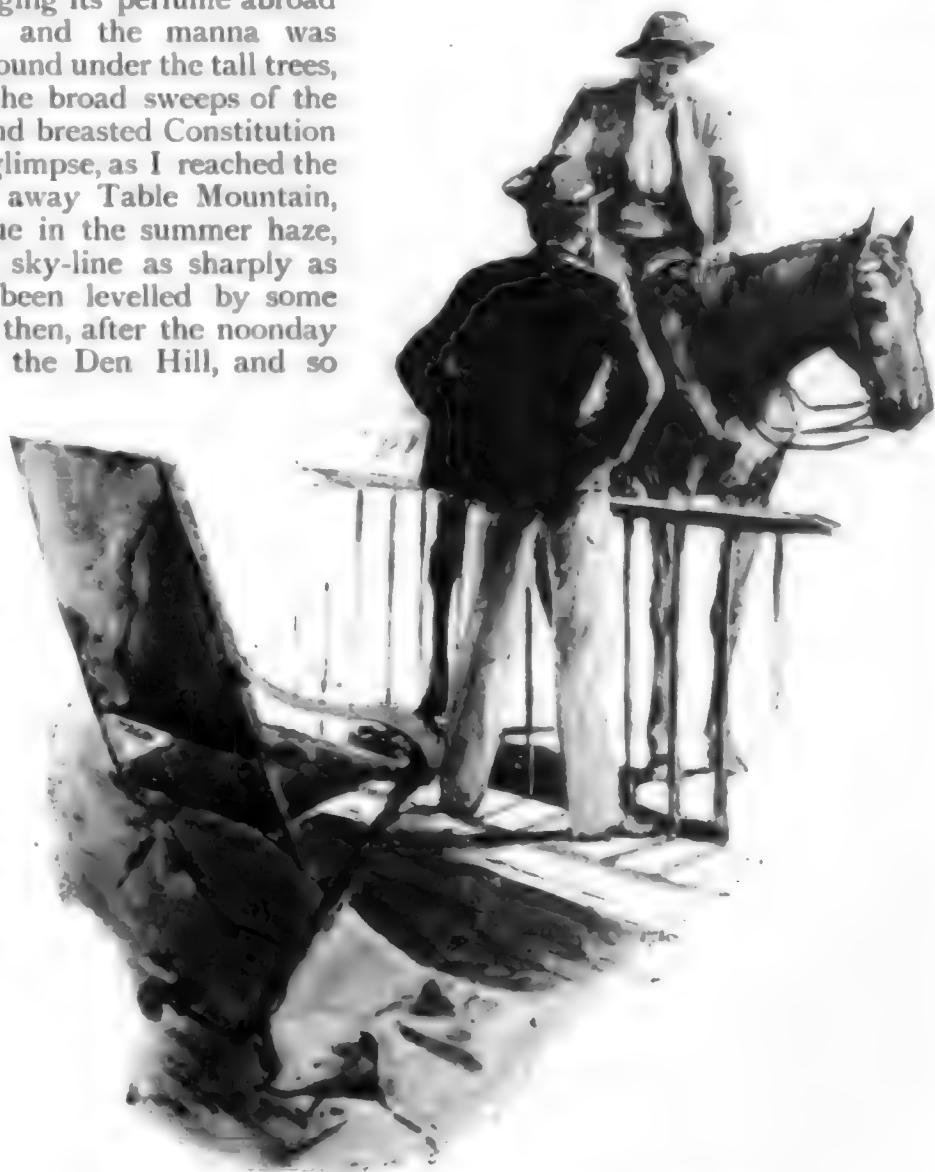
I pulled my horse up to the garden railings.

"Mr. Beresford?" I said.

He dropped the paper that he had been reading and stood fronting me, and I felt that the one quick glance from the keen eyes had told their owner what manner of man I was.

"I've come a long way to see you," I said, "and I've brought you a letter from Mr. Tredgett."

"What! Joe Tredgett?" he cried, and the next moment he was wringing my hand, and almost before I could realise it, my horse had disappeared, and I was



"I'VE COME A LONG WAY TO SEE YOU"

experiencing all the heartiness and warmth of a Bush welcome.

A handsome, grey-eyed veteran was this Beresford, long, lean, and as tough as whip-cord; just the man, possessed as he was of tact, courage, and resolution, that the colony needed, at a time when the convicts held their lives so cheaply that six of them could kill a seventh so that the halter might make an end of them and their troubles.

He was a man of few words, as a rule, but eloquent enough when some chance expression touched the chords of memory.

Two days after our first meeting, we started on a shooting expedition to the Lake District. We had left the last house miles behind us, we had passed under the shadow of the Table Mountain, and across a dividing ridge, when there came to us the first flash from the waters of Lakes Crescent and Sorrell, lying there in lonely loveliness and the heart of the Bush, as though but just fresh from the finger of God.

We were to stay that night at the shepherd's hut that looks out over Lake Crescent, and I felt at peace with all men, when, after a substantial evening meal, we lay stretched on the turf with a pannikin of grog "convenient," and the tobacco smoke curling upward in the soft summer air.

It was, indeed, a glorious night, for the full moon had just swung clear of the horizon, and the broad beam that lay athwart the lakes like a silver blade, was broken only by the bar of land that lay between them. So clear was the air that we could make out with ease the sweep of the further shore, and the foliage of the trees that backed it, and ever and anon a black swan, with outstretched neck, went gliding down the moonbeams, or a flock of wild duck on strident wings whirled by overhead, and circling twice or thrice, dipped to the water, and broke the mirrored surface into a thousand wavelets, that flashed back a silver gleam from their every ripple.

We had smoked in silence for some time, when presently Beresford spoke.

"You called this place a second

Garden of Eden," he said, "and for the matter of that there are some spots I could show you that the Lord must have lingered over lovingly when He'd finished them; but in the days when I knew this place first, the only likeness I could see in it to Paradise, was that Satan had crept in here as surely as ever he had done into Eden. They used to call it Van Diemen's Land and a demon's land it was. Why, sir, the tortures they put upon the convicts, by way of punishment, made the good men bad, and turned the bad ones into fiends, and it was out there that I faced for the first time one of the most desperate of the bushrangers that ever broke bounds," and he pointed with his long, lean forefinger to the narrow strip of land that stretched like a causeway between Lakes Sorrell and Crescent.

"Who was that?" I asked.

"They called him Rocky Wheelan," said Beresford, "and if ever a man had reason for taking to the Bush, he had. Let me just tell you how it happened. You must know that most of the public works, such as making roads and bridges, were done in the old days by the convicts, and to save the trouble of taking the men backwards and forwards to the prisons, they ran up in various parts of the colonies, stations, as they called them.

"It was part of my duty to ride round to these stations from time to time, and take reports from the men in charge, and if any of the convicts broke away I had to arrange for their speedy arrest. Well, one day I was going to the station that had been run up close by where the Bridgewater Causeway crosses the Derwent, above Glenorchy, and as I got near I could see that something was up. I never did like the man who was in command, he was a brute, and he treated the poor wretches as a brute would. I thought at first that he was having a big flog.

"Hallo, Beresford! Look at this," he called out, when he saw me.

"He was standing beside a gum-tree. You know that the outer skin of this tree is very soft and juicy, and bleeds easily; and on this one, just about where a man's back would have been when he was

triced up to the triangles, were the deep cuts where someone had laid on to it with the cat.

"Look at this one," he said, "and then come and see this other," and presently he took me to a tree that had been treated in the same way as the first. "Suppose they'd have been a couple of backs," he said, "which would have got the biggest hiding?"

"He was choosing a flagellator, and that was how he settled the matter. He didn't have one of his own men, that is one of the constables, to do the flogging,



"IT'S MY BROTHER! I CAN'T FLOG HIM."

but he chose a prisoner for the job, and when the flagellator died every convict on the place applied for the billet, and, to cut my story short, Rocky Wheelan got it. He hadn't long to wait before trying his 'prentice hand, for the very next morning a man was brought in to receive twenty lashes. I must tell you that many of the settlers used to go to the larger stations, and to the Penitentiary at Hobart Town, and select what was called an assigned servant. If they liked the looks of any of the men or women, they chose him or her and took them away to work on their farms, and precious

glad the poor devils were to go. Now, if any of these assigned servants misbehaved himself, he was hauled up before the nearest magistrate, and if it was a bad case the fellow was sentenced to so many lashes, and marched off to the nearest place where he could get them. Well, this particular morning the convicts had all been called in from their work to see the flogging.

"Does 'em good," said McGough to me. "Let's 'em see what they'll get themselves one day, if they're not precious careful. Now then, Wheelan, fall to!"

"Rocky had taken off his coat, and turned up his sleeves, and was pulling the thongs through his fingers to make them lissom and supple.

"Can't I see his phiz, sir?" he asked. "He's the first cove I've ever had to dress down."

"The poor wretch's head had been stuffed into something like a pillow-case, and the end of this cloth reached a little way down his back so as to protect his neck.

"Take off his nosebag!" said McGough, and the next minute Rocky Wheelan was looking on the face of his brother. He gave

a great cry and turned to the commandant.

"It's my brother!" he said. "I can't flog him. Shure he's younger nor me. Let me take his place," and with that he pulled his rough shirt over his head and stood with bare back.

"I don't care if he's your father," said McGough. "You took the billet on, and you were glad to get it. Do your duty. Give that man twenty or take twenty yourself!"

"I'll see you damned first," says Rocky.

McGough turned to the warders and

constables standing by, and in a very few minutes Wheelan was triced up beside his brother.

"We'll have a *duet*," said McGough; but they took their hiding without making a sound. My God! it's awful to think that such things went on. You never saw a flogging, perhaps?"

"No, I never did," I said, "and I don't think I could stand to see it in cold blood."

"I can see their quivering backs now," Beresford went on, "and hear the swish of that cat, and when they took Rocky down he'd bitten his lips through, and his face was like a dead man's as he pulled on his shirt and jacket in spite of the awful agony it must have been; and though he never spoke a word, he gave McGough a look as he walked away that said more than if he'd talked for an hour. A fortnight afterwards Rocky was missing, and they told me that the cat was going from morning till night, for McGough flogged half the men in the place on the off chance of their having helped in the escape. Well, once a man takes to the Bush, except in the very rarest case, he knows that his days are numbered, for this isn't a big place like the Continent, and he's pretty certain to be shot or taken, some time or other. Not long after Rocky broke away there was a whole gang escaped from Port Arthur, and he joined them, and it was this party that we fought that night out yonder. We were down Bothwell way when we heard that the gang had stuck up a station over near Cleveland, and knowing the country pretty well, I made up my mind to take a short cut across here. Just as we were starting who should ride up but McGough.

"You've got information about Wheelan," he said, jumping off. "I'm coming with you, and for the matter of that I'd go to Hell for a shot at him." And when I looked at the fellow I knew that there was something between him and Wheelan that nothing but blood could wipe out. We had a black tracker with us, but he wouldn't be any good until we struck their trail somewhere, and we didn't reckon on doing that until

we got a good twenty miles past this spot, and so we were straggling along, McGough and I about a dozen yards ahead, and walking side by side. Suddenly, out of that clump there, about half way across the bar, there came a puff of smoke and a crack, and I saw the dust lift out of McGough's coat, just over his heart, and he pitched forward on to his face, and never even groaned. We were under cover pretty smart, and some of us had close shaves. I got behind that bent tree yonder, and I couldn't show an inch beyond it without getting a bullet to bid me lie close. We had better weapons than they, and when they could stand it no longer they broke and ran; and then it was that we did most mischief, and they left six behind them—but Rocky wasn't amongst them. After that Wheelan turned 'rogue,' and he told me afterwards that he did so because he could play a 'lone hand' best, and could get at the man he wanted better without mates than with them. It was at this time that a series of murders began that at first were perfect mysteries. One day it was young Chamberlain, down Brown's River way, that was found cut to ribbons in a well; then, next morning, Mr. Tuxford—I think it was—was lying shot through the heart on Constitution Hill, miles away; and so on. It hardly seemed possible for one man to be doing them all, but I suspected Rocky from the first—and I was right. He had sworn that he'd have a life for every stroke they'd given him, and he got as far as the eighth, and I heard that he meant to make me the ninth. Well, it was a long time before I got on his track again, but at last one day, up near New Norfolk, he'd left such a warm scent that my tracker, Billy, took it up as fast as a horse could trot, and I reckoned that I had got my man into such a tight place at last that he couldn't get out of it. It was in the Bush, on the way to the Huon, and about fourteen miles from town, and I had got my men round him in such a way that I didn't see how he was to break through; but he did, and this is how it happened. There was a Mr. Luke Wilson, that used to own a lot

of saw-mills on the Huon—that's the part of the colony where the big pines grow—and he'd chosen the very Saturday night that I'd got Rocky cornered to go down from Hobart Town, and pay the men their wages. Nothing had been heard of Rocky for some time, and so Wilson thought he was safe; but he'd reckoned without his host. He was driving a fast mare of his, and he had a man with him that he could trust, and so when he came to the Big Bend, he got out to cut across the gully and pick the trap up again on the other side. He had a hut in the bottom where he kept a lot of tools that his men had been using, and he wanted to see if they were all right. Well, he'd got within about fifty yards of the shanty, when suddenly he heard someone call out behind him:—

“Hands up! and turn round.”

“And when he did he found himself covered by a double-barrelled gun, and the man squinting down it at him was no other than Mr. Rocky Wheelan. Poor old Wilson felt that it was all up with him. When Rocky had eased him of his pistols he made him walk in front to the hut, undo the door, and bring out a shovel. I dare say you've noticed how the earth, and bark, and so on, lie in between the high roots of the gum trees, and how soft this stuff is, and how easy to scoop out. Well, Rocky takes Wilson to one of these trees, and tells him to fall to and dig out his own grave, and a mournful bit of work it must have been, with the muzzle of the gun in the small of his back the whole time. Presently the work was finished.

“Now then,” says Rocky, “take out your wipe and tie it round your eyes. Then kneel down here. I'll give you a minyut for your prayers, and whin I've counted sixty, I'll put both barrels into you.”



“HANDS UP! AND TURN
ROUND”

“Wilson has often told me of that night. He couldn't say a word of a prayer, but the whole of his life seemed to flash before him, and a pretty wild life it had been, though he'd steadied down of late years, and his wife's and children's kisses were almost warm on his cheek. He began to think that it must be getting near the end of the minute, when all at once there was a bang, and he thought that it was all over with him, and I believe he was nearly dead with fright, for when we got to him he was still kneeling there. I went up to him and touched him on the shoulder. He tore off his handkerchiefs, and when he saw us standing round him he staggered to his feet, then with a yell darted away up the track, and never stopped until he fell panting on the station floor, five miles away.”

“I suppose you'd shot Rocky,” I said.

“No! Didn't I tell you, he escaped, and we'd never even seen him.”

“We were closing in, when one of my men stumbled over a log. The fool had

his gun at full cock, and off it went. It took Rocky precious few seconds to drop into the scrub, and though we hunted it like hounds hunting a covert, we couldn't find a trace of him. We picked up his trail before morning, though, and I took Billy the black with me, and sent the other men to get a whale-boat we had and take her down the river. I'm pretty nimble on my legs now, but I was a deal smarter then; and yet it took me all I knew to keep pace with Billy; and I was fairly knocked up when we reached a little creek that runs down through a gully of ferns to the Huon River. You must go that way before you go back to England and see the place for yourself, for you will hardly be able to make out what it's like from my telling you. The only way we could get along was by walking on the edge of the creek, for on both sides of it the scrub is so thick that you can hardly push through it, and overhead the fronds of the ferns meet in such a tangle that scarcely any light can get through. Now and again you come to the trunk of a

to stop, and I saw him squat on his hams, and lift the water to his mouth. I had been resting some ten minutes or so, when I stretched myself at full length on the moss, face downwards, to get a good draught of the cool, sweet water, and my lips were just touching it, when I pulled back, for what I was going to drink had seemingly turned into a pool of blood. I looked up stream, and there was Billy lying right across the water, and I guessed in a second what had happened, and I wriggled like a snake under the ferns, and deep into the scrub. For a few minutes I enjoyed the sensation of being hunted, for I felt certain that Rocky had crawled up to the black and knifed him, and I hadn't the slightest doubt that he was looking for me to pay me the like kind attention. It was man to man now, and I knew that if we came to close quarters I should have to fight



"TURNED INTO A POOL OF BLOOD"

giant gum-tree shooting through the undergrowth, and if you stand at the bottom and look up you catch the sun's light glinting on the leaves and branches two or three hundred feet above you, and a stray beam or two may struggle down to you at mid-day. Well, we'd made our way up this stream until it did little more than trickle. Billy was about a dozen yards ahead, and I was so beat that I slipped down on the moss against the trunk of a fern, and when he looked back I signed to him

harder for my life than I'd ever done before, so presently loosing my knife in its sheath, so that it would come to hand easily, and having seen that the powder was well up in the nipples of my old Joe Manton, I moved off. I had made up my mind to work straight into the scrub, go up hill a bit farther, and then drop back to the creek. It was slow work, for I had to go cautiously, as I didn't want to give myself away, and presently I came to the trunk of one of those enormous trees they call the



Wellingtonia Gigantica. I daresay you'll go to see the big tree near O'Brien's Bridge; and, if you do, you'll find that twenty of you can sit down comfortably inside that tree, and have dinner. Well, this fellow wasn't quite as big as that, but the trunk, as it lay, was high enough to hide a man standing upright. It had fallen inwards towards the creek, and so I made my way to the far end of it, to get round it. The roots, as it fell, had torn up the ground and cleared the scrub a bit, and I was just walking round it, when I ran plump into Rocky's arms. There wasn't a chance to use either guns or knives, for I had him by the wrist in a second, and he caught me in a like grip, and without a word we began the struggle. I was a crack wrestler in those days, and if I had had him out in the open, I could have made short work of him; but there was little room for science where we were, and it was merely a matter of who was the stronger, and pretty soon I felt sure that I should have to put out every ounce of strength I had to get the better of him, for the hand that had caught my wrist gripped it as though it had been in a vice. I never took my eyes off his, and when we had wriggled and struggled for full five minutes we stood and panted, and the strangest thing of all was the grim silence in which we fought.

"All of a sudden I saw a chance, and getting my leg behind him and pushing him back with all my force, down we

went, and I on top. Well, I shouldn't have got him then but for a most unexpected ally in the shape of a big black snake that must have had his hole at the root of the tree, for as he passed us his tail brushed across Rocky's face, and he was so scared—and for the matter of that I wasn't very comfortable—that he loosed his hold of my hand,

"You've got me," he said. "Blow my brains out. I'd have done the likes by you av I'd got you fixed up like this."

"Well, I took him down to the settlement, somehow, and we bundled him into the whale-boat and got him up to town that way, for if the people had known that we'd taken him, they'd have lynched him, sure enough.

"The jury weren't long in finding him guilty, and on the Sunday before his execution he sent for me. They didn't bother in those days about leaving warders with the condemned man, they just put him in a suit of irons that kept him from moving about or making away with himself, and so I found him sitting on the edge of his bed.

"I'm glad ye've come, Misther Beresford," said he. "I want to know av ye'll be koind enough to carry a message for me to my brother Tom. Shure, he'll think more uv it av it comes from you, and av you speake to him, he'll listen to you. Tell him from me to do his toime,

and maybe he'll come out well, and tell him he nadn't bother any more about our oath, for I've paid *him* that he knows of.'

"Are you speaking of McGough?" I said.

"Shure, I am, sor. Beloike you look upon me as a brute baist, and my hand's

after she crept back home, a soiled lily. And whin she died, and my mother follid her, Tom an' me swore that we'd have his heart's blood. Well, the family came to hear of how we tuk ut, and they got him a Govermint appointment, and sint him away, and it was years asther that we heard he was in Australy. They wouldn't take us for emigrants, for what cud we do but the rough work, and sorra a trade had we to our fingers' ends. And so we made it up, and we bruk into his father's house and was caught red-handed



"HE GOT THE GRIP HE WANTED"

that blood red that you wouldn't touch it, but for all that I was wanst the baby that my mother dandled and crooned over, and called her darlin'. Av ye've a minyut to spare I'd loike to tell you how I came here. Him that's gone, that McGough ye were mintionin', was the curse of me and my family. My sister Eileen was the bonniest colleen on all the country side, wid niver a thought of avil in her, no, not even whin she tuk up wid him and wint off, and three months

—as we meant to be. And be this and that they gave us tin years aich, and they had to send us."

I could almost have thought that it was Rocky Wheelan who was speaking, so well did Beresford enter into the spirit of the scene that he was relating.

"I won't kape you long, sir," he went

on; but the devil, his mashter that he'd served so long, must have given him up at last when he tuk me to the very station where he was commandant; an' I tell ye, Misther Beresford, it made my heart harder than iver, for I see how little he thought of what he'd done whin he didn't even remimber the man he'd wronged. I tuk the flagellator's place, so as to get near him, an' av I'd stayed there I'd av knocked the loife out av him wid my bare fistes. You may thank the saints that my hate was what it was, for the minyut I got the glint of the loight on his handsome, avil face that day I cudn't hould me foire, and I let him have it; and av I'd waited we'd have shot ye all down like sheep. I must have gone mad asther that, sor, and av I'd a hundred loives I'd lay them all down to gather up the blood I've spilt. I've seen his riv'rince, and he's shrived me, and may the Lord have mercy on me. But ye'll spake the wurrd for me to Tom, and ye'll tell him I killed McGough. Oh, Eileen, darlin', ye were me own little playmate, and I can see ye now wid yer pretty bare feet and yer laughin' blue eyes standin' fornint me and tasin' me. I'll

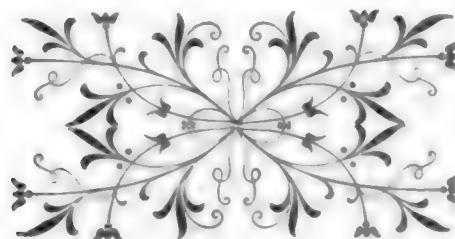
die happy, sor; and shure I'll dance on nothin' wid as loight a heart as iver I stepped it on my father's flure to the sound of his ould fiddle now that I've done her justice. Shure, though, it's hard to die this dog's death widout the grip of a hand to help me!"

"He got the grip he wanted, for I stood beside him on the scaffold; and as he slipped into eternity the last word I heard on his lips was the name of his sister Eileen."

There was silence for a minute or so, and then Beresford spoke to the shepherd.

"Here, Steve, just give me another tot of grog and I'll turn in. We've a long day before us to-morrow, and I'm not so young as I used to be."

I couldn't say anything in the way of thanks for the yarn, for there was a lump in my throat that made speech impossible, and the moon, as I lay and stared at her, was shrouded in mist, and the night wind in the rustling reeds on the lake shore seemed to be sighing Rocky's requiem, and to be chanting a dirge in the tree-tops in memory of his sister Eileen.



“Where Merchants most do Congregate.”

[The Merchant of Venice.]

The Corn Exchange.

By **FREDERICK DOLMAN.**

*With Illustrations from Photographs by Messrs. A. and G. TAYLOR,
Mr. EDMUND PASSINGHAM, &c.*

WHEN Londoners speak of the Corn Exchange, they really mean two establishments in Mark Lane which go by that name—the “Old” and the “New” Exchange. Since 1881, the “Old” has really been the “New,” for in that year the building, which dated from about the middle of the last century, was razed to the ground, and in its place the present handsome structure was erected. But names live, if buildings die, and the Exchange which, as is recorded in its masonry, came into being in 1828, still retains the name that was given to it then, but which now more properly belongs to its newer and finer neighbour.

The Corn Exchange has a history which is both simple and short. In the Middle Ages the farmers, millers and bakers did their business together without needing the assistance of a “middleman.” London’s supply of corn, of course, being drawn mainly from the Home Counties. The farmers and the millers would bring their produce to London, attend the markets held on Cornhill and in Cheapside, and themselves offer for sale what they wished to sell. Official edicts, such as one forbidding a corn-dealer from having more than ten quarters in stock at one time, and another making the buying of corn for the purpose of reselling it a punishable offence, encouraged the continuance of this state of things, although they had the admirable object of cheapening as much as possible the price of “the staff of life.” It would be interesting, nowadays, to know exactly how these decrees were enforced. Not very successfully, it is to be presumed, for in the fifteenth century the Corporation of London, in a spirit which a modern

Socialist must much admire, considered it desirable to establish public granaries in order that the price of corn might be kept in check during times of scarcity. This duty to the poor was also cast upon the Livery Companies, and until the reign of Charles II., London was thus amply provisioned against famine. These civic storehouses were destroyed in the Great Fire, and, with the changing conditions of trade, it was considered unnecessary that they should be replaced.

It was these changing conditions which ultimately led to the establishment of the Corn Exchange. With the development of commerce the farmers began to find it more profitable to entrust the selling of their produce to men who made a business of buying and selling, instead of attempting to drive their own bargains, and in course of time corn factors formed a class by themselves. This movement began with a few Essex farmers, who, when they had failed to sell all they had to dispose of, found it inconvenient to come to town again for the next market. So they entrusted the landlord of the Whitechapel inn at which they stayed with samples of their produce and directions for its sale. This gentleman eventually found—so the story goes—that selling corn on commission was more profitable than inn-keeping, and consequently gave up the inn for a factor’s office. His success naturally attracted competitors, but it was a good many years before the factors were numerous enough to feel the need of a place of business to themselves. About 1740 the question of a Corn Exchange began to be agitated; a company was formed in 1747 to undertake its building, and two years later it was opened to the public.

For half a century this building proved sufficient for the needs of the London corn merchants. With returning prosperity, after the long war, however, the Corn Exchange became intolerably crowded on the market days. Yet, for some reason or other, its directors and proprietors were opposed to all proposals for its extension. Accordingly, in 1825, there appeared the prospectus of a new Corn Exchange. I have been fortunate enough to obtain a copy of this document, and as it possesses a certain historical interest for those now engaged in the corn trade, I give it in full:—

on the claims of applicants in the same line of business with themselves, and of exercising an arbitrary discretion in granting or refusing stands. The difficulty of obtaining a stand is so great that many persons of unimpeachable character and respectability in the trade have been in vain soliciting twelve to eighteen years, and others equally eligible deterred from making application.

"When the Corn Exchange was erected, there was not above a fourth of the quantity of corn sold in London which is now sold there; the want of accommodation, both for the factors and the public



MR. SAMUEL STRICKLAND.



MR. FRED. BRYANT.

"The present Corn Exchange in Mark Lane, erected in 1749, is divided into eighty shares, held by about sixty private individuals, who open it on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, when it is frequently so crowded as to make it quite a labour to reach the upper end or to return. The entire management of the property and the letting of stands, of which (exclusive of eight for hoymen) there are only sixty-six—and of these several houses hold two—is vested in such of the proprietors as are corn factors, in number about thirty, who consequently have the exclusive power

attending it, is apparent to everyone who visits it in the hours it is open; indeed, several persons are obliged to have stands in the adjoining houses; others to transact their business in taverns, in the street and under gateways, to the great annoyance of the neighbours, who have made it a subject of complaint to the City authorities. The object of the present application is to incorporate a Company for the erection of a commodious and handsome Exchange, with considerable additions for the accommodation of the trade and the public, the management to be under equitable rules and condi-

tions. The proposed undertaking, carried into effect, would afford all the wholesale part of the trade an equal opportunity of exposing their goods for sale, thereby creating a fair competition, highly beneficial to the agriculturist or consigner of corn and the public. The proprietors of the present Corn Exchange have been respectfully invited to join in the measure and offered the full current value of their shares, with the option of taking two-fifths of the shares in the new undertaking; that the details for carrying it into effect should be concerted mutually with them; that they should have a principal share in the direction, and that every

standholder in the old Exchange should have a similar situation, with better accommodation in the proposed Exchange than he now possesses. But these offers have been rejected; it is, therefore, hoped that Parliament will, in its wisdom, grant permission to bring in a Bill for the erection of a new Corn Exchange."

Parliament at once recognised the strength of the case which was thus presented, and a private Act was passed, authorising the creation of a new Corn Exchange. The proprietors of the old institution doubtless regarded the new with much disfavour, but it was soon seen that they could both prosper. In fact, when the Corn Laws were abolished and a great change was, in consequence,

brought about in Mark Lane trade, the accommodation of both markets was exhausted, and the directors of the Old Exchange tardily decided to undertake its extension in 1850-51. The old spirit of jealousy between the two institutions has now all but disappeared. There is a communicating door between them, and some merchants are members of both, whilst purchasers pass indiscriminately from one to the other. If there is any of the old jealousy left, it is practically confined to the officials of the two markets, who, in conversation with a stranger, will stoutly maintain the superiority of that in which they happen



to be employed.

As far as the building is concerned, there can be no question in respect to the superiority of the Old Exchange over the New. As rebuilt fourteen years ago, it is a structure of noble proportions, if of no great artistic beauty. It has a straight, broad frontage of stone, ornamented by Corinthian columns, it being rightly considered that the narrowness of Mark Lane rendered any considerable architectural effect out of the question. On entering the Exchange (which is open to the public, during business hours, without restriction) one finds oneself in a commodious ante-chamber, where a number of men in the rough garb of porters and barge-men are lounging about. They are waiting

here for instructions from some of the dealers inside, now engaged in selling corn, as to where their cargoes are to be delivered. You sometimes find these men on the Exchange themselves, their costume and countenances giving a little picturesque variety to the groups assembled there. Not that it can be said that on the Corn Exchange there is anything like the dreary monotony of silk top hats and black coats which characterises City men. A minute's glance through the spacious hall and around the stalwart marble pillars reveals several sorts and conditions of men, besides the factors and merchants, whose little stalls and stands, to the number of about one hundred and fifty, make but little appreciable difference in the amount of room there is for standing and strolling about; among others, farmers, millers, seed-growers and the manufacturers of agricultural implements and machinery.

When the new building was erected the rooms above the ante-chamber were set apart for the use of millers. The millers perversely preferred to stay below, however, and these rooms are now in the occupation of a big firm of coal-owners. The millers do most of their business together between three and four o'clock, when the market for all other purposes is practically over. The members of the London Millers' Association meet in an office close to the Corn Exchange every Monday morning and fix the price of flour. Although the number of London millers has now fallen to fifteen or sixteen—chiefly owing to the greater concentration of the trade—their

decision more or less governs prices of flour at Mark Lane during the week. On the other hand, Mark Lane has never known what could be called a "corner;" none of its traders have ventured to try to emulate the exploits of those who have "cornered" the Chicago wheat market. Nor is there very much speculation, except on the part of Greek merchants, I am told, in "futures" or "options." Consequently, the Corn Exchange never experiences a panic and has comparatively few bankruptcies.

At the farther end are the subscription rooms and the Secretary's offices.

In the "subscription rooms," those frequenting the Exchange can obtain, for three guineas a-year, some of the conveniences of a club—reading and smoking rooms, refreshment buffet, and so forth. They form, I should think, a pleasant retreat for half an hour or so from the bustle and turmoil of the market. In the Secretary's offices I learn something of the rules and customs which govern the great amount of business transacted on the Corn Exchange. In the first place, whilst buyers and the public generally are admitted without let or hindrance, those who wish to offer anything for sale on the Exchange must

pay to the Corn Exchange Company an annual subscription of ten guineas, if having a place of business in London, and five guineas otherwise. These subscriptions, with the rents of stands—which range from £50 to £150 per annum—and premiums paid for vacant stands by incoming tenants form the revenue, out of which the Company, after meeting all the necessary expenses of the



MR. WILLIAM RINGERIDGE.



MR. WILLIAM DUNHAM.

Exchange, pays a dividend to its shareholders. The shareholders are a much smaller body than the stall-holders and members, who now number about a thousand; but the election of the Directors, who manage the Exchange, is, of course, entirely in their hands. The Directors, of whom Mr. John Aste is Chairman, and Mr. W. E. Chambers Vice-Chairman, have never attempted to regulate the business of the Exchange, and the few rules by which it is regulated are all unwritten. One of the most important of these rules, which would have in the Law Courts the force of custom, provides that a transaction entered into on one market day can be revoked any time before a certain hour on the next market day. This rule, reasonable enough in its essence, has, I believe, been abused to the point of raising considerable dissatisfaction with it. It is

tions, they have been able to make another purchase at a lower price. According to another time-honoured custom of the Corn

Exchange, there must be ready-money payment for all purchases as soon as completed, unless contracts to the contrary are entered into.

An exception to this rule is made in favour of the dealers of Essex and Kent, who, by immemorial right, can give bills. It is believed that this concession, as well as another made to the Kentish hoymen, who were admitted to the Exchange free of any subscription, had its origin in the gratitude of London to the corn-growers of Kent and Essex for continuing to supply the city during the plague. The last of the hoymen, a notable character in his way, is still freshly remembered by the older habitués of the Exchange. He died some fifteen years ago, at an advanced age, and for some years before came every market day, al-



MR. ALFRED ASTE.



MR. WYATT POWLE



MR. JOHN NESBIT.

said that some unscrupulous dealers often "cry off" a bargain, ostensibly on the ground that the merchandise was inferior to the sample, whereas their real reason for doing so is that, owing to market fluctua-

though he never attempted to do any business. When any dealer offered him a freight for his craft, lying idle somewhere down the river, he always shook his head with the pride of independence. Mr.

Philip B. Skelton, the Secretary of the Corn Exchange Company, showed me a coloured portrait (which hangs in the board room) of the old fellow as he appeared almost down to the day of his death, in the old-fashioned jerkin and knickerbockers which the masters of the "hoys" used to wear. The "hoys," it may be remembered, not only conveyed a great deal of corn to London, but in the summer-time were also much in favour with cockneys intent on a holiday at Margate and Ramsgate.

Mr. Skelton was good enough to introduce to me another relic of the past of the Corn Exchange, in the shape of a musty old book, bearing date 1785. It is entitled "The Case of Christopher Atkinson, Esq., stated at large, together with a Complete Account of all his Commission Transactions with the Honourable Commissioners for Victualling His Majesty's Navy." Mr. Atkinson was a factor employed to purchase corn for the navy, who was accused of peculation. According to him, the accusation proceeded from some members of the Corn Market, who were envious of the position Mr. Atkinson held there, and he began proceedings against one of the newspapers which published it. In support of these proceedings he made an affidavit, which was made the subject of a prosecution for perjury, and, in the

end, Atkinson was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment, and to a day in the pillory at the Corn Market. The book was prepared and published by him whilst in the King's Bench Prison, in the hope that it would restore his good name, and vindicate his innocence. Whether it did, or should have done so, is to-day of little consequence; but in the picture which it incidentally gives of the Corn Market and the corn trade a hundred years ago, the book is full of interest.

From its pages we learn that the ancestors of some of the best-known members to-day were also regarded as leading men

on the Corn Exchange in the days when George the Third was king. Thus Mr.

John Bovill, giving evidence on behalf of Mr. Atkinson, deposes "that he hath been a corn factor and corn merchant in London for sixteen years, and perfectly understands the practice of the said trade." Mr. Christopher Chambers and Mr. William Sherwood—names which, in the persons of Mr. W. E. Chambers and Mr. Nathaniel Sherwood, are still held in high esteem in Mark Lane—were also among the witnesses in the case.

I return to the Market. It is 2 p.m., the busiest hour on the Corn Exchange. The afternoon sun

is shining through the glass-domed roof on fully two thousand people, gathered



MR. JOHN ASTE.



MR. FRANK HUTCHINSON.



about the stalls in groups, or elbowing their way through the throng. Agricultural depression! There is assuredly no sign of it here, as thousands and tens of thousands of bushels and sacks change hands every few minutes; although, on making inquiry, you learn that wheat is but 19s. per quarter—lower than it has been this century. Towering above the crowd, near the four-faced clock, which occupies the centre of the Exchange, is Hazlewood, the Chief Inspector of the Market, and one of the celebrities of Mark Lane. He stands close upon six feet six inches in his smart brown-and-gold uniform, and for eleven years or more has been the glory of the members of the Corn Exchange. All have a good word for him, and the sight of his Herculean form must have often exercised an excellent disciplinary influence upon any disorderly spirit, although he has only once or twice been required to assert—I cannot say exert—his strength. Beyond an occasional "pillow fight" with seed bags, and a still more occasional football match, the good order of the Corn Exchange has never been disturbed.

At 2.30 the Old Market is timed to close, and five minutes later Hazelwood rings a bell. At this signal there is a rush from the Old Market to the New of such as do business in both. The small space of the New Market is then taxed to its uttermost,

and to move from stand to stand is a matter of the greatest difficulty. There are about a hundred stands, or stalls, the rents of which run rather lower than in the other market. The New Market has the seed trade all to itself, whilst the Old Market has nearly all the business in flour, about half the space being devoted to the display of samples of the seeds of vegetables and cereals.

Those who wish to sell on the New Market have to pay an annual subscription of two guineas to the London Corn Exchange Company. As a profitable undertaking, by the way, the Company must have realised the highest expectations of the author of the prospectus of 1825. The Company, which, it will be observed, is distinguished from the original concern by the prefix "London," has an annual income of nearly £8,000, and its expenses do not amount to more than a third of this amount. The capital consists of one thousand eight hundred shares of £50 each (£37 10s. paid), and dividends to the amount of 30s. a share are paid half-yearly. The Company has one hundred and twelve shareholders and ten directors, *viz.*, Messrs. Alfred Aste (Chairman), E. Skelton (Vice-Chairman), John Pickard, Benjamin Smith, Nathaniel Sherwood, Edwards, W. E. Chambers, Edward Sturdy, H. J. Guerrier and Denny. These gentlemen are, at the same time, all active members of the Market. Mr. Sherwood, for instance, as the head of an old established firm of seed merchants, is one of the



MR. ROBERT NOSBOP.

busiest men in Mark Lane, and Mr. Pickard is the moving spirit of the London Seed Trade Association, the secretary of which, a canny Scot, David Allester by name, must also be mentioned as one of the familiar figures of the New Market. One of the "characters" of this market is Mr. Robert Marsh, a seed-grower of Dunmow, to whom is chiefly due the successful revival of the ancient "fitch of bacon" ceremony at that rustic Essex township.

Among its other best known members are Mr. E. J. Beale and Mr. Charles W. Sharpe, both of whom have been unsuccessful candidates for Parliament, the former for South St. Pancras and the latter as Mr. Chaplin's opponent in the Sleaford division of Lincolnshire. Mark Lane's only representatives in the House of Commons, I believe, are Mr. W. Smith, member for the North Lonsdale division of Lancashire, and Mr. Thomas Robinson, member for Gloucester. In the Old Market, among its more influential members, must be counted Mr. W. J. Harris, who was for many years one of the leaders of the small Protectionist party in the House of Commons, and Sir John Johnson, an ex-sheriff of the City.

It is characteristic, perhaps, of the old order of things that the so-called New Market should have a tavern attached to it, which adds £700 a year to its revenues. This tavern practically serves the same purpose as the subscription rooms in the Old Market, although one or two of its rooms are reserved for the use of subscribers; and at lunch-time on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays it does what may be colloquially described as "a roaring trade." It need hardly be added that some of the members of the market do much of their business at its bars, assisted by a tankard of foaming ale or a glass of sparkling champagne. There are one or



MR. RICHARD REID.

two things about the New Market reminiscent of the "good old times." The "beadle" is the title given to the custodian of its good order, and the list of members is written and attached to one of the stone pillars, the pen being put through the names of those who have died or retired.

As I have said, the Corn Exchange has no body to regulate its business corresponding to the Committee of the Stock Exchange. Such disputes as occur, however, are invariably referred to the London Corn Trade Association, and in contracts a clause is usually

inserted providing for this. The Association, through its Committee, nominates as arbitrator some old and experienced member of the Exchange in whose ability and impartiality there is general confidence. Mr. John Nesbit, Mr. John Ross and Mr. Keen are the gentlemen most frequently chosen for this office, and I am told that their fees as arbitrators amount during the year to a very considerable sum. Arbitrations are conducted at the Corn Exchange on the "off" days—that is to say, Tuesdays and Thursdays—the rapidity of the proceedings usually affording a remarkable contrast to those of a Court of Law. Apart from the millers, the system of arbitration seems to give satisfaction throughout the trade. As millers are so frequently parties to disputes which, according to the contracts, must be referred to the London Corn Trade Association for arbitration, it is said that they ought to be represented on the Association and be eligible as arbitrators. The Association has offered to appoint two or three millers arbitrators on condition that they pay the annual subscription of five guineas and become members, but this condition the milling trade has not thought fit to accept. So this little difference between the millers and the corn merchants continues.



OR, OSCAR NAMENLOS.

By C. APOLLONIA.

A NEIGHBOURING church clock had just struck two—two in the morning—and still Oscar leaned out of the window of his sitting-room overlooking the Green Park, and smoked on, lost in meditation.

Snatches of conversation, which had been borne to his ears at Mrs. Benyon's evening party in Pont Street, flitted through his mind. He had been engaged to play there two pianoforte solos, and he smiled now as he recalled the feeling of contemptuous amusement with which he had realised the chief reason of his engagement.

The very sight of Mr. Chiffinge hovering in the vicinity of the hostess, with his fawning, vacuous smile and would-be important manner, revealed to him that she was a new woman in London society, and had delegated this well-known caterer to manage her party.

The lavish floral decorations and the scale upon which the refreshment arrangements were carried out testified to the costliness of the entertainment; and Oscar himself, as the latest society lion, was, perhaps, the most costly advertisement of all.

As he had advanced to the pianoforte Chiffinge's remarks to the more important guests had been quite audible to him. "Such a favourite at Marlborough House." "Just come on from the Duchess of Leeds," etc.

With a sarcastic smile, he had seated

himself at the instrument, resolved to rattle off two of his noisiest and most soulless productions, as the most fitting offering to this chattering crowd; and, in spite of all this, the sweetest, softest harmonies had floated from his fingers across the heated room, and he played as he never before had played to a London crowd.

For, at the end of the room, he had caught sight of a girl's sweet, flower-like face, fresh and pure in outline and expression; and two wonderful grey eyes, soft with enthusiasm, full of unspotted ideals, had met his own in glance of sweetest sympathy, and blotted out all the rest.

The few noisy preliminary chords melted into strange, weird harmonies; the musician's thoughts wandered back to half-forgotten scenes of his boyhood; his fingers evoked strains like the wind-stirred harmonies he had heard floating down the aisles of a far-off German forest from rude Eolian harps placed in the tallest tree-tops by a music-loving people. Those sighing chords had once whispered hope and inspiration to the heart of a dreamy, neglected boy. And now all his later ambitions of fame and noise and gold seemed to fall away, and the ideals of his youth came back as he played for this sweet woman.

He did not even remember if the vapid crowd had applauded when he ceased playing. He only remembered the eloquence of those lustrous starry eyes, the tremulousness of the mobile lips when the

genial host had brought her—his daughter—to thank him.

" Bah ! " suddenly exclaimed Oscar, throwing away the end of his cigar ; and, shaking himself upwards from his lounging posture, he rose and turned to the interior of his cosy room, where the wan-
ing lamplight fell upon an artistic dis-
order of books and music and bric-à-brac.

" Bah ! she is Mrs. Benyon's daughter ! Fancy a woman of *that* calibre—huge, coarse, evidently a worldling of the most uninteresting type — having *such* a daughter. I can see her supercilious stare when her husband asked me to call. But the girl's eyes ! Oscar, my friend, do not make a fool of yourself. A most substantial cheque will lie upon your table to-
morrow as an end of *that* episode."

* * *

The afternoon sun, discreetly veiled by awnings and soft window draperies, streamed into Mrs. Benyon's richly furnished drawing-room, where she lay back in an easy-chair. The *Morning Post* lay upon her lap, and she had just perused for the tenth time the list of distinguished guests who had attended her function of the previous evening.

Her costly interview with Mr. Chiffinge that morning was, after all, the return for eminently satisfactory services.

The only pity was that he had erased from her original invitation list the names of all her old friends. But here her triumph was recorded for all to read, and this reflection almost caused the cup of Mrs. Benyon's satisfaction to overflow.

Gabrielle, too, had looked extremely well last night — more animated than usual,

and Lord Griffin had seemed really *épris* with her !

Yes, Gabrielle should make a brilliant match. " My daughter, Lady Griffin " would sound very well ; and Mrs. Benyon closed her eyes, which were small and dark and piercing ; her rather compressed lips relaxed into a smile, and her portly, satin-encased figure sank yet deeper into the cushions as she indulged in her day-dreams.

The closing of a door caused her to look up as Gabrielle entered the room.

" Good gracious, child, how pale you look ! " she exclaimed. " Are you sure that Parker 'massad' your face properly last night ? Yes ? Ah ! it is the more necessary after late hours and fatigue. Have you seen the list of the party ? Here it is. I see that the German pianist came on to us from the Duchess of Leeds, where, as Mr. Chiffinge told me this morning, he is a most frequent and intimate visitor. Strange, to be sure ! The position of such people was very different in my young days. Eh, what do you say, my dear ? "

But Gabrielle had repressed her hasty exclamation, and, with a slightly impatient movement, took the newspaper from her mother's hand and retired to a distant corner of the room to peruse it.

" What has come to Gee lately ? " said Colonel Benyon about a month later to his wife. " She is music mad. She seems to care for nothing but concerts and musical parties, and is everlastingly strumming on the pianoforte."

" Gabrielle was always musically inclined, " answered Mrs. Benyon complacently ; " although you rather upbraided me for making her practise so



much, I always realised that it was an accomplishment that would add greatly to the prospect of her making a brilliant match."

"If she makes a *happy* one, that is the chief thing," said the Colonel.

Mrs. Benyon shrugged her shoulders, knowing her husband too well to think of enlarging on the subject.

"*Apropos* of music," she continued, "Gabrielle wants me to invite Herr Oscar Namenlos to our dinner-party next week. What do you think?"

"It seems to me, Julia, that he is here pretty often. Do you think it quite wise to encourage the friendship that seems to have sprung up between him and Gee?"

"As for that, Gabrielle is far too well aware of the duties she owes to her position in life to allow this 'friendship,' as you call it, to be anything beyond mere musical appreciation. And for the rest, he is received everywhere, and I must say, he is always most obliging about playing whenever one asks him."

"Do as you please, my dear," said the peace-loving Colonel, "as far as I personally am concerned, I like him very much. Only it struck me that a man so good-looking and so agreeable in every way is likely to make an impression on *any* girl's heart."

"Quite absurd to look at it in that light at all," said his wife.

So Oscar was asked to the pompous dinner-party, where Lord Griffin was the guest of honour.

Mrs. Benyon prided herself upon her table decorations, and to-night her favourite florist had surpassed herself. The table was a delicate tracery of fern and freshly-cut pink carnations. In the centre rose an artistic edifice of the delicate blossoms, among which nestled globes of electric light, tied up with roughly cut pink silk, to imitate the flowers. The sparkling glass and silver, the excellent service, the very breath of the early June night, floating in through the open windows, all served to intoxicate the hearts of Oscar and Gabrielle, who had both but too surely fulfilled the mutual promise of sympathy, silently given at their first meeting.

Gabrielle sat next to Lord Griffin, but nearly opposite her was the face of the man whose glance and touch had led her to the threshold of a magical land, the portals of which were opening ever wider and wider to receive them both.

His was a dark, passionate, poetic face, with lines that spoke of struggles overcome, with full sensitive lips, and square determined chin.

Colonel Benyon intercepted the glances that passed between them, and murmured to himself, "Julia is blind, absolutely blind."

After dinner Oscar held them all spell-bound with his music. And to one among them his heart was poured out in language more perfect than speech.

After the guests had departed, and before retiring for the night, the Colonel put his hands on Gabrielle's shoulders, saying :

"What do you say to an early stroll to-morrow morning, before mother's day is well begun?"

"I should like it of all things," said the girl, looking into his face with a bright smile. "It will seem like old times, dad; it is *ages* since we had a cosy chat."

The next morning, before ten o'clock, father and daughter were strolling arm-in-arm, across the park, in the direction of Kensington Gardens.

"It is indeed like old times, daddy," said the girl, giving her father's arm an affectionate squeeze. "I miss our long walks more than anything else in London."

"Then you won't be sorry to go back a little sooner than we had arranged?"

"Go back!" she echoed blankly. "Why, father, the season isn't half over."

"I thought you cared nothing for the season, Gee; you have often told me so."

"Well, I don't care a scrap for all the balls and parties," she replied, after a short pause; "and shall not miss them in the very least."

"Then, what is the attraction here?" he asked.

Gabrielle did not reply, but glanced timidly into his face.

"Herr Namenlos played very well last night," he said suddenly, as they seated themselves on a bench overlooking the water.

The ready colour flamed into Gee's face, but she did not reply.

"You admire his genius very much, do you not, dear? Admiration for such a truly great gift as he possesses might, perhaps, especially by those wanting in life's experience, be mistaken for admiration of the possessor."

"And if, in this case, I united *both*, father?" Gabrielle's voice was low and tremulous, and her father's heart contracted with a strange spasm of pain as he replied.

"I should then tell you not to encourage a romantic sentiment born of the ardent imagination of enthusiastic childhood."

"And if I told you in answer, father, that my childhood had slipped away for ever, and that the future seems but one vast longing for the realisation of a great hope?"

Her bright eyes were fixed on his with eager, pleading expression.

"Child, child, our granted prayers are sometimes our greatest woes. I will not pretend to misunderstand you, dear; we are too good friends for that; and I am certain you will know the grief I feel in slaying this firstborn hope of yours."

"You could not be so cruel, father?"

A sad smile broke on the kind old face.

"Cruel, dearest? Would it not be *truly* cruel if I allowed the life of my only child—the heiress of all my wealth—to become the prey of a penniless adventurer, and for a mere fancy?"

"A *fancy*! Father, you of all people should know that I am not given to fancies. We must all live our *own* lives, father; and surely our own hearts know best?"

"And parents' experience of life is to count for nothing in shielding our children? Has he spoken to you, Gee?"

"No, father; but I know he cares for me, as I for him."

"At least, he seems an honourable man," said the Colonel.

"Of course he is," said the girl enthusiastically. "Oh, father, think of the time when you were young yourself, and do not be hard upon us!"

Unconsciously Gabrielle had touched a tender chord, and the Colonel's thoughts flew back to the days of his youth; but, alas! to a time anterior to the period when he had lightly wooed and easily won Mrs. Benyon.

"Well, dear," he said at last, "most parents think it their duty to try and wean their children from that which they consider an injudicious choice—not that they never have made mistakes," he added, half involuntarily.

The girl looked at him beseechingly, but said nothing.

"To prove to you that I do not speak

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"LIKE OLD TIMES, DADDY."

without personal knowledge," he continued, "I will tell you something which I have never spoken of to others; indeed, I hardly know if I ought to tell you now? Long ago, when I was not much older than you are, someone loved me in the same romantic sort of way as this. I was very headstrong; I loved her dearly, and thought love the ruling power of life. Her parents would not hear of our marrying; I was poor then. Through me, Gee, she became *very* unhappy."

"But if you *loved* her, father?"

"Ah! we, too, thought then that that was enough; blind, foolish children that we were! But all this has been a turned-down page in my life for many a long year, Gee, and we will never refer to it again. There were many bitter tears shed, dearest; and, perhaps, if I can spare such tears to you, it may serve somewhat to atone."

His voice trembled; and the girl flung her arms round his neck, and sat with her face on his shoulder in the silence of the summer morning. No human beings were in sight, the sunshine crept over the water and stole in rays of light to their feet; and, without another word being spoken between them, Gabrielle knew that her father was her ally.

A few evenings later the Colonel and Oscar sat together in the former's smoking-room, chatting tête-à-tête.

Mrs. Benyon and Gabrielle were out at some receptions, and for various motives, the Colonel had asked the young man to spend a quiet evening with him, an invitation which the latter had accepted with alacrity.

"You speak rather casually of giving up your musical career?" said the Colonel in answer to a remark of Oscar's, "and I fear domestic happiness would hardly compensate for the loss of the intoxication of success such as you have had. Then, too, the artistic temperament is apt to glorify the object of love into a being of supernatural attraction, which matrimony proves, but all too soon, to be of the common clay."

"I know the usual prejudices against my class," answered Oscar quietly. "But why should not the idealisation of the woman we love prove her happiness, presupposing, of course, that the love be mutual?"

"Was your own early home life so happy, that you seem so confident? You know I do not ask from mere curiosity," he added, as a spasm of pain contracted Oscar's face.

"If anyone on earth has a right to know the story of my past life," said Oscar, "it is you. I never speak of it, partly because there is so little to tell—and that little not of the brightest; partly because hiterto I have not felt that it in any way interested those whom I have known. It is quite different now, and I should like to tell you all there is to be told upon the subject."

The Colonel leaned back in his chair, and fixed his eyes on the young man's face. "Of one thing I feel certain," he said, as Oscar seemed strangely agitated, "your past is darkened by no stain of dishonourable deed."

"By dishonourable act of *mine*—no," replied Oscar. "But across my life is the sinister mark borne by all who, accor-

ding to the social code, have no right to bear their father's name."

The Colonel started and grew very pale. He opened his lips as if to speak, but no sound issued from them. For a minute's space the ticking of the clock upon the mantelpiece was distinctly audible.

"You consider, perhaps," said Oscar at last, his eyes still fixed on the other's face, "that one so branded has no right to approach a stainless household, and covet its fairest possession?"

The Colonel bowed his head upon his hand as Oscar continued, in concentrated tones:

"No one could have considered this more than I have hitherto done. But a time came when every consideration died suddenly in the overwhelming might of all-powerful love. I forgot the shadow that the 'sins of the fathers' had cast across my lonely childhood—forgot that the very name I bear, *Namenlos* (*Nameless*), was bestowed upon me by the taunt of a schoolfellow—a taunt that burned into my heart a scar of wounded pride, and was ever with me to spur to further effort in making it a name that the whole world should know and cite with praise. And now, having, by unfailing endeavour, so far succeeded, tell me, do you think it worthy to be borne by the woman I love?"

The Colonel raised his head from his hand, and his face looked haggard and drawn. "God forbid that I should judge alone by the world's code," he said brokenly, "since it is given to me, who have so little right to condemn the faults of others, to judge of such a case in connection with the life of my only child."

A gleam of hope illuminated the young man's countenance.

"Give me time to reflect," continued the Colonel, passing his hand across his brow. "Tell me everything, all you know of—of—your parents. Your father—?"

The young man's brow darkened as he answered:

"I do not know if he is even aware of my existence. Of my poor mother, who, as I since heard, married a wealthy man, to whom she never told the story of her youth, I have nothing save a little miniature, which reached me after her death. Her husband was miserly and hard; she married him, hoping to thus gain the means of educating me, and of seeing me

from time to time. We never met after I went first to a remote German village to school as a little child. I know, too, that she was not always able to send my school fees; and the schoolmaster, a hard, grasping man, who made, in reality, a certain amount of capital out of my musical talent, gave me the bread of charity to eat, and ever encouraged the more lucrative of his pupils to oppress me in the thousand ways possible to sensitive childhood. But, in spite of it all, I lived my boyhood apart from them, in a world of beautiful, ever-haunting melody, and with an ever-increasing, fixed ambition—a resolve to soar above, away from that life, to cultivate the genius that was clamouring within me for utterance, to give it voice and freedom. I will not weary you with the details of the gratification of that imperious desire. I believe that a good fate presides over the lives of those destined to succeed through artistic gifts; and my good fate took the shape of a wealthy music-lover, who heard me play in the village church, and who gave me the means and opportunity of study, and the satisfaction of amply repaying him later on.

"But my poor mother died without seeing me again, and I am sure she died of a broken heart long before my good fortune befell me. As I dimly remember her, she was gentle and sweet and loving. She had no other child."

Oscar's hands trembled as he detached a locket from his watch-chain.

"See," he said, opening it and passing it to the Colonel, "this is her portrait; I have never shown it to anyone else."

Mechanically the Colonel put out his hand to take it.

The face was that of a woman in her first youth—a soft, baby face, with fair hair and large grey eyes. The painter had caught their frank, trusting look, and the little painted picture seemed instinct with life.

The Colonel held the miniature to the light, and as his eyes met the glance of the portrayed face, over his own countenance came a sudden pallor as of death-itself.

"Marie! My God—my God!"

His arms were flung across the table and his grey head fell upon them, as if an invisible hand had suddenly stricken him low.

In that moment Oscar divined the truth. He rose to his feet, and with wide, horror-stricken eyes, gazed at the bowed figure. Then, with a sudden movement, he bent forward and snatched the miniature from the old man's clenched hand, and placed it hurriedly in his breast.

Strange were the mental visions that rose before him in this supreme hour of his life.

A low shuddering moan issued from the Colonel's lips as Oscar



HIS GREY HEAD FELL.

took the miniature from him, but he did not move.

At last Oscar spoke, and his voice sounded strange, and like the voice of one speaking from afar.

"I am going away, for ever. At least she must never know."

Through his brain rang the words that seemed associated with the droning voice of the priest at a little far-off village church—

"JUDGE NOT THAT YE BE NOT JUDGED."

Almost unconsciously his lips formed the words, as the Colonel looked up at last, his face suddenly aged and changed.

The old man moaned feebly, "My God! is there no atonement possible?"

There was a sound of opening and closing of doors. The eyes of the two men met in a mutual apprehension. Gabrielle and her mother had returned from their party.

"Are you here still, father, dear?" said the voice beloved of them both, as the door was pushed open, and a picturesque figure in evening dress and soft fleecy wraps, stood on the threshold. It halted there, and the smiles died from her face as she gazed from one to the other with a quick foreboding of evil.

Not a word was spoken, as she suddenly crossed the room to her father's side, and placed her hand upon his shoulder.

The Colonel opened his lips, but no sound fell on the air. He looked in mute appeal at the younger man, who stood, white as death, gazing at them both.

"Mademoiselle," the words came with strange effort, "Colonel Benyon and I have been exchanging confidences, and all that now remains for me is to say good-bye. I leave England to-night."

The Colonel felt the little hand upon his shoulder tremble, and the fragile form sway, but he put out no protecting arm to shield the child he loved so dearly.

"I must go to-night," repeated Oscar, in nerveless tones, and with a hopeless gesture, he turned towards the door.

But as he turned, a wild cry rang out from the girl's heart. "Father, what does it all mean? Tell him not to go!"

At the sound of her voice, Oscar turned, and with unutterable love in his eyes, crossed the room, and took her hands within his own.

He lifted them reverently to his lips. "Good-bye. There are some things beyond hope or power of redress. Do not think hardly of me; my life lies in far lands, where love will never enter in. But the memory of a happy dream will be with me till I die. And you, may you be happy in *forgetting*; that is my most unselfish wish, and one day we may meet again in the land where there is no marrying nor giving in marriage."

He released the little hands, which were cold and lifeless, and which fell to her side helplessly as he relinquished them. One glance at the old man's bowed head, and the door closed upon his retreating footsteps.

"Father!" cried Gabrielle wildly, fall-

ing on her knees before him. "Father! you *promised*, you —"

But the Colonel's face was ashen grey, and he murmured, with his hand pressed over his heart, "Forgive—forgive—the sins of the fathers, the sins of the fathers," he feebly repeated, and fell heavily forward upon his face.

His loving heart had broken in finding himself the destroyer of his darling's happiness, and his soul had flown to the judgment seat of a Higher Tribunal.

Mrs. Benyon was doomed to become a disappointed woman, as regards her ambitious plans for her daughter's aristocratic alliance, but she made a compromise with fate, and some years after the expiration of her term of widowhood, she herself was led to the altar by the ancient scion of an ancient family, an impecunious widower, with numerous offspring, among whom Gabrielle never found a semblance of her old home life.

Content with but a portion of the wealth which was her due, she left her native land and chose for resting place a little German village, Ober-Melsungen by name, where she dwelt in peace among the simple folk, who learned to love and reverence the sweet sad-faced English lady.

Here, shut off from the world by pine-clad hills, in the valley of the gentle Fulda, Gabrielle's best years glided away. The villagers often wondered how she could listen so patiently to Herr Schmidt, the village organist, when he repeated the oft-told tale of the great musical genius, whose name was now known throughout the whole of Europe as a household word, having first studied in their midst, and under Herr Schmidt's own tuition. But she encouraged the old man's garrulosity and often visited with him the primitive chapel and sat in the little sanctuary while he practised on the well-worn organ.

But her favourite haunt was the deep, cool pine forest, where the rude Eolian harps sobbed their weird songs through the mournful branches.

Their refrain was ever constant, and whispered still of hope and comfort, just as they had once brought solace and hope to the heart of a lonely, dreamy boy.

Perhaps his spirit lingered there yet, and helped to teach that gentle heart the lesson of resignation.

Whispers from the Woman's World.

BY FLORENCE MARY GARDINER.



BRIDAL COSTUME (*continued*).

THE Marriage Processions of various Oriental Nations have already been referred to, and in India it is customary to perform the ceremony under a species of canopy richly ornamented and lighted by lamps. The bride wears, in addition to the native costume, a curious veil composed of strings of gold beads and tassels. In Hindu marriages the sacred fire or *omam* (which is constantly renewed by throwing upon it scented oils, sandalwood, incense, and other aromatic perfumes), is a prominent feature, and the union of a couple is consecrated by sprinkling a handful of saffron, mixed with rice-flour, on their shoulders. Finally, the husband presents his wife with a little golden image called *talee*: a substitute for the wedding ring, and worn by Indian women as their symbol of matrimony.

A missionary thus describes a Buddhist Marriage:—"The bride, loaded with jewellery, accompanied by women richly attired, entered the room, and sat down with the bridegroom on the floor. A number of candles were then lighted, and the company saluted and congratulated the happy couple, and expressed their kind wishes by blowing smoke towards them, while a band of string instru-

ments discoursed sweet music. Two cushions were placed before the bridegroom, on which a sword was laid, and food was also near them. Next the hands of each were bound together, then the two to each other with silken threads. This act was performed by the nearest relative present, and completed the ceremony." Brief, indeed, are the forms of marriage indulged in by the people of Borneo. Each of the contracting parties chews a betel nut; an elderly woman mutters some sort of incantation and brings the heads of bride and bridegroom in close contact, after which they are declared man and wife, and are no longer regarded as twain, but one flesh. The Cherokee form of marriage is perhaps the most simple. The two join hands over a running stream, emblematic of the wish that their future lives, hopes and aspirations, should flow on in the same channel. A peculiar custom of the Lascars is the putting of a ring on the great toe when they marry.

Mrs. Bishop, who has explored Tibet and studied the habits and customs of the people, informs us that polyandry is favoured by the women of that country. The heir of the land and eldest son appears to be the only member of the family who can contract a marriage in the legal sense as we understand it, but all his brothers are accepted by the wife as inferior or subordinate husbands. By this means they are kept well under the control of the superior husband, whom they regard as the "Big Father," and, as a matter of form, any children who may be born are accepted by him.

Thus the whole family are attached to the soil and seem to work in concord, and the women have



HINDU BRIDEGROOM'S PROCESSION

the satisfaction of knowing that in the average course of Nature they can never become widows, and that there will always be someone to work for them and their offspring. "It is the custom for the men and women of a village to assemble when a bride enters her home with her husbands, and for each of them to present her with three rupees. The Tibetan wife, far from spending these gifts on personal adornment, looks ahead, contemplating possible contingencies, and immediately hires a field, the produce of which is her own, and accumulates from year to year, so that she may not be portionless should she desire a divorce."

The African tribes, of course, differ materially in their marriage customs, but some form of exchange for the services of the woman are insisted on, and often take the shape of a present of cattle to the bride's father. On the west coast, in the neighbourhood of Gaboon, where slavedom is recognised, there is an understanding that a wife may be purchased for a slave bundle, valued at about £6 in English money,



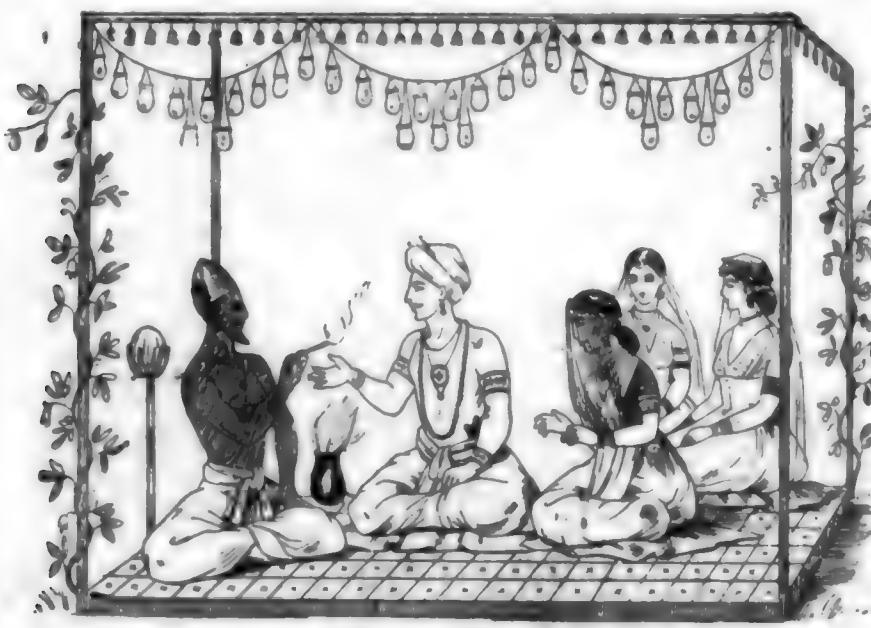
VEIL OF HINDU BRIDE

rent article of commerce, and a piece of native cloth, manufactured by these people for dress purposes, from a species of palm which grows on the river banks in great luxuriance. Both sexes anoint themselves with palm oil and other greasy substances and no greater compliment can be paid to an African belle than to say she looks "fat and shining."

Mr. Hutchinson in his interesting work, "Ten Years in *Æthiopia*," gives a quaint and amusing account of the toilet of a Fernandian bridegroom: "Outside a small hut, belonging to the mother of the bride

expectant, I soon discovered the happy bridegroom undergoing his toilet at the hands of his future wife's sister. A profusion of Tshibbu strings being fastened round his body, as well as his legs and arms, the anointing lady having a short black pipe in her mouth, proceeded to rub him over with Tola pomade. He seemed not altogether joyous at the anticipation of his approaching happiness, but turned a sulky gaze now and then on a piece of yam which he held in his hand, and which had a parrot's red feather fixed on its convex side. This was called 'Ntshoba,' and is regarded as a protection against evil influences on the important day. The bride was borne down by the weight of rings and wreaths and girdles of Tshibbu. Tola pomatum gave her the appearance of an exhumed mummy, save her face, which was all white; not from excess of modesty, for the negro race are reported to blush blue; but from being smeared over with a white paste, the emblem of purity." What a hideous substitute for the classical wreath of orange blossoms, and what a contrast must be offered when the cosmetic peels off, and displays the dusky skin upon which it is laid!

According to Russian law no man can marry before he is eighteen years of age, or a



HINDU MARRIAGE CEREMONY

and there appears to be no sliding scale as to youth, beauty, form or degree. A bundle contains specimens of every article sold by a general storekeeper. The most important features of a slave bundle are a Neptune, or brass pan used for making salt, which is a cur-

eous substitute for the classical wreath of orange blossoms, and what a contrast must be offered when the cosmetic peels off, and displays the dusky skin upon which it is laid!

woman before she is sixteen ; nor after he is eighty, and she is sixty. Priests are permitted to marry once. Secret marriages without witnesses are regarded as invalid, and both bride and bridegroom must be baptized persons. If a Russian takes a foreigner for a wife, she must bind herself in writing to bring up any children she may have in the Greco-Russian faith. According to an ancient custom the bridegroom presents his bride with the costume and jewellery worn at the marriage. The dowry comes from her family, and consists of a complete wardrobe, silver, linen, and household furniture of all kinds. The hair of an unmarried woman in Russia is dressed in a single plait hanging loose upon the shoulders, and tied with ribbon. After marriage it is arranged in two braids coiled round the head, covered with a cap tied behind, or with a cotton or silk handkerchief, and a little lappet of linen rests on the forehead and is considered an inevitable symbol of marriage. Marriages are performed after banns, and much of the finery used by the lower classes is hired for the occasion ; and the crowns used in the Russian ceremony are generally the property of the Church. Formerly they were worn for a week, but this practice has been discontinued.



NORWEGIAN PEASANT BRIDE AND BRIDEGROOM



A RUSSIAN BRIDE

There are three distinct periods in the life of a Norwegian woman, and each one has marked characteristics, particularly as regards dress. During girlhood, up to the time of confirmation, a solemn occasion for which there is much preparatory training, girls do not usually go from home to work, or earn their own living. Among the poorer classes this ceremony takes place when they are about fifteen. Their petticoats are short and their hair is arranged in two long plaits. After confirmation they are supposed to regard life from its more serious aspect, and to engage themselves with various duties according to their station. The third stage, of course, is married life, and it should be stated, that neither men nor women can enter upon the Holy contract unless they can bring proof of their confirmation, and can show ample evidence of sufficient means to provide for a household. The marriage is preceded by a betrothal ceremony, when the intending pair go to the church, accompanied by their friends, and exchange rings of plain gold and presents of jewellery and apparel, which must be worn on the wedding-day. At her marriage the peasant bride wears the crown. It has a rim of brass to fit the head, and the upper portion is of silver and gold, sometimes embellished with

precious stones. Such crowns are generally heirlooms, and it is not uncommon for all the brides of one family for centuries to wear the same adornment for the head. A very usual dress on such an occasion is a plain skirt of some woollen material, with a bodice and full sleeves of snowy linen, a corselet of red and green, ornamented with bands and buckles, and a white apron trimmed with embroidery. An illustration of a silver-gilt breast ornament worn by Swedish brides is given; the band is wrought with bosses, and depending from it are small beaten discs, and a medallion bearing the sacred initials I.H.S. The bridegroom's hat in the illustration was probably an heirloom too, from its shape and fashion. He wears a red waistcoat cut short and fastened with brass buttons, and a loose cloth coat ornamented with embroidered revers. The black small clothes show to advantage a well-shaped leg, and on his feet are low shoes. Usually the festivities in connection with a peasant wedding in Norway are kept up for three days and, during the time, there is much feasting and merry-making among the friends of bride and bridegroom.

Gipsies are, as a rule, married at a very early age. A girl is generally betrothed at fourteen, and becomes a wife two years later. The marriage ceremony is performed by a priest wearing a ram's horn as a sign of office, and as becomes a nomadic race, the four elements, fire, air, earth and water take a prominent position. The horn is the symbol of authority and is often made use of in Scripture. So much were ram's horns esteemed by the Israelites that their priests and Levites used them as



ORNAMENT WORN BY SWEDISH PEASANT BRIDE

trumpets in the taking of Jericho; and modern Jews when they confess their sins announce the ceremony by blowing a ram's horn. In ancient Egypt and other parts of Africa, Jupiter Ammon was worshipped under the figure of a ram, and to this deity one of these animals was sacrificed annually. It seems to have been an emblem of power from the remotest ages. It would therefore appear that the practice of the gipsy priest wearing a ram's horn suspended from a string round his neck at a marriage is derived from the highest antiquity, and undoubtedly points to the Oriental origin of the gipsy race.

Various expedients have been resorted to by different rulers of sparsely populated kingdoms to encourage men to enter the married state. In ancient Rome the law forbade that a bachelor should inherit any legacy whatever, and in Sparta, under the rule of Lycurgus, they were not permitted to have a part in the government, nor might they occupy any civil or military post. They were excluded from participation in public festivals, except on certain fixed occasions, and then the women had the right to lead them to the altars, where they were beaten with rods to the sound of scornful songs. As late as the reign of William and Mary, widowers were taxed in England at

the following rates:—

Dukes, £12 10s.; lower peers a smaller sum, and commoners 1s. each, if they elected to remain in a state of single blessedness. Widows also, especially those of high degree and fortune, were encouraged to dip again in the matrimonial lottery, and children were betrothed at a very tender age.

Bridesmaids in Anglo-Saxon times attended on the bride and performed specified duties, particularly in the festivities which usually followed on such occasions. Even during the earlier portion of the present century it was a common custom for one to accompany the bridal couple on their journey.



A BRIDEGROOM'S TOILET AT FERNANDO PO

moon; and it was also her duty to prepare and present the "benediction posset" which is referred to by Herrick in "Hesperides":—

"A short sweet prayer shall be said,
And how the posset shall be made.
With cream of lilies, not of kine,
And maiden blush for spiced wine."

The fashion of brides wearing spotless white is a comparatively modern one. From accounts of bridal gowns in bygone times, we find rich brocades, golden tissues and coloured silks were employed for this purpose; and at the present day white is considered only appropriate to the virgin, and is absolutely dispensed with by those women who have been married before.

Of modern marriage customs in England there is no occasion to speak, for what woman is there among us who has not made an exhaustive and complete study of this vital matter. It may, however, comfort those who are beginning to wonder if marriage and giving in marriage is going out of fashion, to know that during the first quarter of 1894, 95,366 persons were joined together in the British Islands, an increase of 18 per cent over the first three months of the previous year, 1893, and 7 per cent over the mean rate for the same quarter for the preceding ten years. Figures are incontrovertible facts, so our ears need no longer be assailed by the bitter cry of

"DARKEST SPINSTERDOM."

DOMESTIC SERVICE PAST AND PRESENT.

SOLomon with all his wisdom was not exempt from certain domestic difficulties, and not the least of these was the management of his household. Even in those remote times, serving-men and women (particularly the latter) proved a thorn in the flesh, but the bias of his sympathies is plainly shown in a single sentence, "A good mistress makes a good servant," a text which should be laid to heart and pondered over by all who have the control of a household.

Might rather than Right, has been in the ascendant for countless centuries, and now the climax is reached for no longer are labourers



AN ENGLISH BRIDE

to be lured for love or money, and we are brought face to face with three contingencies. We must re-organise our households in such a manner that they offer attractions to all classes of English domestic servants; we must dispense with their services, and depend entirely upon ourselves, and such resources as are to be obtained from mechanical appliances of various kinds; or we must meet the difficulty as has been done in other countries, by importing foreign labour.

Most of us who have considered this subject, seem inclined to bear the ills we have, rather than fly to others that we know not of; to employ the alien offends

our insular prejudices, neither do we relish the idea of ourselves undertaking the unceasing drudgery entailed in keeping a dwelling of even moderate size free from impurities: a task apparently as hopeless as the cleansing of the Augean stables.

I believe that this problem will be solved by those who are beginning life, rather than by the middle-aged mistress, who naturally inclines toward certain dogmas of domestic faith which are, and I speak with all respect, hardly up to date at the *fin-de-siècle*. It is an impossible feat to convince one who has a vivid remembrance of some faithful Mary Jane of a past generation (who was a little rough maybe in manner and method, but who never failed the family in misfortune, sorrow, or when the Angel of Death knocked at the door) that servants of to-day would do the same if they lived under similar conditions, and were regarded as part and parcel of the family they served, not as troublesome incumbrances specially appointed for their mistress's undoing, and of such a peripatetic nature that no permanent interest could be taken in their affairs.

This seems to me a bad beginning, for if we would attach others to ourselves, we must treat them at least as human beings, with hopes, aspirations, and ideas closely akin to our own. In common justice we should accord certain rights and privileges to those born in a lower station than ourselves: it is ridiculous to ride roughshod over the cherished sentiments of another, and to expect in return loving reverence and a devoted regard for the welfare

of ourselves and those who are dearer to us than life. Such a course would be contrary to the laws of Nature which govern all races and nations in a greater or less degree.

If one woman undertakes to serve another for a certain stipulated sum per annum, she does not sell herself body and soul, nor is she to be expected to more than fulfil the contract she has entered into. There should be so many hours for labour, with proper intervals for meals and recreation, and a chance at least once in the twenty-four hours of exchanging the close atmosphere of the house for the breath of heaven. The custom of giving those in our employ inferior food to that which we take ourselves is another disagreeable practice, and so is that constant locking and unlocking of stores, which implies a suspicion of honesty. Good work is dependent on good health, and the latter upon a varied and wholesome diet, sufficient exercise and a proper regard for hygienic rules.

Another weak point in domestic organisation is the average servants bedroom. The furniture is generally insufficient for the ordinary needs of life, the bedding is of such a quality that it is calculated to scare away, rather than woo refreshing slumber, a hip bath is regarded as an absurd superfluity and two, and often three persons are expected to sleep in a space barely sufficient for one.

Very little opportunity is given for social intercourse, and kitchen visitors are strictly tabooed by many mistresses, or barely tolerated. Yet one of our chief pleasures is receiving our friends; then why should we forbid a reasonable indulgence in this respect to those who, by the circumstances of their lives are denied many of the comforts we enjoy. The chances of a servant becoming a married woman are rather less than those enjoyed by work-girls and others of a similar class; so a kind-hearted mistress will not draw too tight a rein when a favourite domestic announces that she is "keep-

ing company" with the postman, butcher, or grocer's young man, but will afford her suitable opportunities of receiving her *fiancé* in a warm, well-lighted kitchen, instead of promiscuously over the area railings, or in a back lane. In the question of books and newspapers are we not apt to be a little selfish? Accumulated piles in the drawing-room would wie away a leisure hour in the kitchen, and a little consideration of this kind is seldom abused, if it is fully understood that reading is not to interfere with the day's work. Tickets for some simple amusement are also appreciated, and tend to cement a kindly feeling between mistress and maids, especially when their services are dispensed with at some personal sacrifice.

Like all women who have possessed hearth and home, I have had plenty of experience with good, bad and indifferent servants. I am, however, thankful to say that the good ones predominate, and I have a grateful remembrance of many who considered my interests before their own, who rendered faithful, honest, and willing service, and whose capabilities in illness was beyond all praise. They, to their honour let it be said, stand out in bold relief from the few who were addicted to fire-water, or were

afflicted with an obliquity of vision which prevented them from distinguishing between *meum* et *tuum*.

FASHIONS AND FRIPPERIES.

At this season of the year there is nothing very new to record with reference to dress. The stock of clothing laid in early in the winter still serves its purpose, and as yet it's too early to judge what Madame la Mode will favour us with in the Spring Fashions; so a few trifling additions to our wardrobe will suffice. These can be bought with advantage at the sales which all the leading shop-keepers indulge in shortly after Christmas, at which some astonishing bargains may be picked up, if we can only keep



AN OPERA MANTLE AND
A PRETTY CLOAK

a cool brain amidst the bewildering attractions which meet our view on every side and make us feel the truth of the old adage that the most dangerous hole in a woman's pocket is the one at the top. At such times lengths of brocade and velvet, glittering trimmings, fairy-like lace, dainty opera mantles, and model dresses direct from the leading Paris houses, are sold for a third of their original cost. Far ready money for the purchase of Spring stock is essential to large firms whose standing expenses are enormous, consequently judicious purchasers reap the benefit.

Opera cloaks are either cut short at the

design in purple irises, the yoke and bishop sleeves are finished with bands of chinchilla, and the lining is of plain white satin. For useful cloaks, handsome black brocades with coloured flowers are in great demand. These are usually lined with the predominating colour in the pattern, and are trimmed with black fur or full ruches of ostrich feathers. In the second sketch a pretty little cloak for outdoor wear is given, made of brown cloth with silk chenille fringe, worn with a picturesque velvet hat of the same colour, with osprey and feathers to match. Very stylish too, is the theatre gown of shrimp-pink miroir velvet with plastron of



A THEATRE GOWN



AN AFTERNOON RECEPTION DRESS

waist, like the example given, which is of dahlia-miroir velvet, lined with blush-rose satin edged with ostrich feathers and further embellished with jet embroidery and ribbon, or take the form of long jackets with voluminous sleeves and linings of satin or other rich fabrics. The following are good specimens. A circular cloak of dark green moiré velvet reaching to the edge of the gown has double shoulder-capes worked with iridescent beads, a lining of *can de nil* satin, and is fastened at the neck with large enamel clasps. Another of deep yellow brocade has balloon sleeves and lining of satin to match and trimmings of white Mongolian goat fur. A third of white satin has a bold

cream satin and *mousserine de soie* embroidered and fringed with gold.

The afternoon reception dress is of apple-green satin with upper skirt and gathered fichu of black lace. The bodice has a folded collar of satin, and rosettes of the same are fastened at the side and just below the puffs of the sleeves.

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Bazaars, like the poor, are always with us, and it is somewhat difficult to vary the entertainment offered on such occasions, while the decorations in the majority of cases pall by their monotony. *Eastern Scenes, Swiss Villages,*

and Mediæval Towns are repeated *ad nauseum*, but a Snow Festival and Doll's Fairyland is a new departure. The stalls should be arranged with overhanging eaves covered thickly with straw and cotton wool liberally frosted. Icicles, leafless boughs of trees, trails of ivy, evergreens, particularly holly, and a few robin red-breasts can be introduced with good effect. The band stand should be arranged as an ice grotto and its apparent size increased by the judicious use of looking-glass. A gipsy fortune-teller's cave can be similarly treated and the magic crystal may take the form of a circular globe of glass, cut in facets and brilliantly lighted. The refreshment stall should have in the centre a piece of looking-glass, representing a frozen lake on which miniature skaters disport themselves. It should be bordered by a snowy bank of cotton wool and trails of ivy. On a little island in the centre stands a lamp surrounded by holly and mistletoe, and the scene may be made more realistic by the liberal use of crushed glass and table salt. The menus should also be frosted and decorated with winter scenes. A stage can be erected at one end of the hall and ornamented to correspond with the stalis, &c. Gauze must be tightly stretched over the opening as it adds to the illusion when tableaux are represented, and a liberal use of lime-light is recommended. Fairy tales offer numerous suggestions and scenes from Cinderella, Puss in Boots, Tom Thumb, Beauty and the Beast, &c., are very popular. These can be alternated by a good marionette show. A shoe of sufficient size to admit of a child and a goodly number of dolls forms an attractive feature at fancy sales. It can be covered with coloured satin and a seat inside accommodates the little saleswoman. Another idea for a summer bazaar comes to us from our American cousins. It is the athletic carnival, which may be given either for a benevolent object or for the purpose of raising funds for any of the numerous clubs, athletic or otherwise, in which we are interested. Such a bazaar should be

held in private grounds and partakes more or less of a garden party. Refreshments can be served in the house; and marquees afford ample room for the articles on sale. A favourite stall is that connected with everything used at the game of lawn-tennis. Here should be found nets, poles, balls, rackets and cases, mallets, lawn markers, tapes and pins, belts, caps, guides to the game, scorebooks and photographs of the various tennis champions, masculine and feminine.

Football, cricket, and golf, should also be represented, and one stall can be devoted to the sale of skates, hunting crops, and various odds and ends used by boating men; as well as garden-tents, croquet sets, dumb-bells, picnic-baskets, hammocks, &c., which find a ready sale. Flowers, fruit, confectionery, and dairy stalls should also be introduced, so as to give lady visitors an opportunity of purchasing.

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I propose to devote the latter portion of my article to the younger members of the family circle, and earnestly desire the co-operation of mothers and others, who have little people under their care, so that *The Children's Realm* shall meet the requirements of those for whom it is intended, and prove of real interest to them. All under seventeen will be eligible to join "The Ludgate Children's Bond of Union," and to compete for prizes which will be offered from time to time. Much good work has been done for children's hospitals and homes by similarly constituted associations of workers, and it is with every confidence I place this matter before my readers, and ask their cordial support. I shall be grateful for any suggestions, which should be addressed to me at the office of THE LUDGATE ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE, Temple House, Temple Avenue, London, E.C., and next month I shall give full particulars of the Union I propose to form and the rules and regulations of membership.

FLORENCE M. GARDINER.

The Stolen Idols.

By HENRY CHARLES MOORE.

— ~~CONTINUED~~ —

THE average Hindu servant is an unmitigated liar. Anglo Indians are considered not unskillful at drawing the long bow when relating their adventures to a circle of admiring friends at London, Bath or Bedford, but nothing that the most imaginative of them can say can be compared with the everyday lies of a Hindu servant, whose ability in that respect is only equalled by his proficiency as a thief. And yet it falls to the lot of every Anglo-Indian to possess, at one time or another, a servant in whose honesty and truthfulness he places implicit trust.

Aubrey Allen, of the Indian Civil Service, possessed a Bengali Boy, of whose integrity he was fully convinced, and when business necessitated his leaving Calcutta for Rangoon, he took his trusted servant with him. Allen was a great collector of curiosities, and his visit to Burma was an opportunity to make additions to his collection which might never present itself again.

"Boy," he said shortly after their arrival, "I want an image of Buddha. Try to obtain me a rare one."

"Yes, sahib," the Boy replied, and three days later brought for Allen's inspection an excellent brass image of Gautama. It was about two feet in height, and the pedestal was studded with rubies.

"By Jove, it's a beauty," Allen exclaimed. "Where did you get it, Boy?"

"From English soldier-man, sahib. If master want it, soldier-man will sell for fifty rupees."

"Plunder, I suppose," Allen muttered; for he knew that the idol was worth considerably more than was asked for it, and, going to his cash-box, he took out the necessary notes and gave them to the Boy to pay the soldier at once.

A week later Allen went for a stroll through the jungle, outside the town, in search of botanical specimens, and while engaged in examining some orchids, heard

voices near him. Peeping through the brushwood, he was surprised to see his Boy and another Boy squatting down opposite to each other, and engaged in a serious conversation. Allen's curiosity was aroused, and any qualms he may have had about acting the eavesdropper were speedily dispelled by his discovering that his confidence in his servant had been entirely misplaced. He gathered from the Boys' conversation that the soldier, from whom he thought he had purchased the image of Buddha, was a myth, and that it really came from the residence of a Mr. Maitland, whose Boy had stolen it and sold it to his Boy, the rascals dividing the fifty rupees between them. But Mr. Maitland, who had been up country, was expected back that day, and his Boy was very anxious to replace the idol before his return. Allen's Boy, it appeared, had promised faithfully to steal the image and restore it to his accomplice before Mr. Maitland's return. This he was, however, unable to do, for Allen, with reasonable suspicion of the honesty of the hotel servants, had locked up the idol in his trunk and kept the key in his pocket.

Although greatly annoyed to find that his long-trusted Boy was no better than the majority of his class, Allen could not but feel amused at the fix in which the two cunning servants found themselves. His amusement, however, was of very short duration, for, to his horror, he heard his Boy calmly suggest that the only way out of the difficulty was for his accomplice to poison his master, declaring that if Maitland Sahib were killed, he couldn't enquire after the stolen idol. But the other Boy retorted that if Allen Sahib were a dead man, there would be no danger in taking the keys from his pocket. It was decided, however, after a long and excited argument, that Maitland Sahib was to be the victim. Allen waited to hear no more, but hurried quickly out of the jungle, determined to frustrate their villainous

intentions. He had made Maitland's acquaintance before he went up country, and would warn him of his danger directly he returned. Maitland was an adventurer, who had arrived in Burma some fifteen years previously, and, after hanging about the drinking bars of Rangoon for some months, had gone up to Mandalay, where he managed to win the good opinion of King Theebaw. After Theebaw's downfall, Maitland returned to Rangoon possessed of considerable wealth, which he added to by successful business ventures in that city. At times his commercial sharpness was but a very few degrees removed from fraud. The European residents looked upon him with suspicion, and every Oriental that came in contact with him cordially hated him. He thrashed his servants unmercifully for trivial offences, and heaped studied insults upon every educated Indian or Burman that he met.

Allen met him at the dreary railway station and told him of the plot against his life.

"Much obliged to you for warning me," Maitland declared, "and if I don't give the thieving scamps something more than they reckon for, then may I be poisoned."

"Hadn't we better hand the rascals over to the police?" Allen said.

"The police! certainly not. I'm off to England in three days and don't intend that the punishing of two dirty Hindus shall delay my departure. I've never yet let a cursed black stand in the way of my pleasure or business, and I don't mean to begin now. No, leave the matter in my hands, and I promise you that I'll punish the wretched curs far more speedily and quite as severely as the law would. Don't say anything to your Boy, but bring him round to my place as quickly as possible. Do you mind?"

"Oh no."

Directly Allen arrived at Maitland's house the two Boys were called up into the verandah. They stood at a respectful distance from their masters' chairs, looking the picture of innocence.

"Boy," Maitland said to his servant "you've stolen my image of Buddha."

"No, sahib," the Boy declared promptly; "I no steal nothing."

"You liar, I tell you you sold it to Allen Sahib's Boy for twenty-five rupees."

Thinking that his accomplice had

confessed, the Boy replied, "Sahib, I will speak the truth. Allen Sahib's Boy say to me: 'Your master give my master image of Buddha. I come to take away.'"

"Didn't he give you twenty-five rupees for it?"

"No, sahib. He gave me no money; no nothing."

"Sahib, your Boy speak lies," Allen's Boy joined in. "He say to me: 'Maitland Sahib give me image of Buddha; I will sell it for fifty rupee.' So I buy it for my master and give Boy fifty rupee and no keep one pice for myself."

"But you told me," said Allen, "that you bought it from a soldier."

"No, sahib; I no say that. Master forget what I say p'raps."

"Oh, no I don't."

"Sahib's Boy great liar," Maitland's Boy declared.

"Silence, you villains," Maitland shouted, "you are both liars. You have stolen the image between you, and if I send you to the lock-up, you will be both well lashed. But if you do as I tell you, I will punish neither of you. Listen now. This day before sunset you must bring me two valuable images of your Hindu gods, Vishnu and Lakshmi."

The Boys trembled, and the humble *punkah waliyah* squatting at the end of the verandah almost betrayed his surprise by pulling the rope with double his usual energy.

"Do you hear?" shouted Maitland.

"Yes, sahib," the Boys answered.

"Well, go at once, and if you don't bring me the images before sunset, I'll set the police after you for robbing me." And to accelerate their departure, he kicked them energetically out of the verandah.

"You didn't say anything about their plot to poison you," Allen remarked in an undertone.

"It would have been unwise," Maitland replied; "for if they knew that I was aware of it, they would escape as quickly as possible, but believing that I have only a case of theft against them, they will return and bring the idols with them."

"But really I don't see in what way you are punishing the rascals."

"Wait!"

About half an hour before sunset the Boys returned, streaming with perspiration, and produced from the folds of their garments two idols of exquisite workmanship. The one representing Vishnu was black

and possessed four arms, the hands of which held respectively a club, a shell, a discus and a lotus. The other representing Lakshmi, the wife of Vishnu, seated on a lotus, was of a bright golden colour. Allen and Maitland admired them immensely.

"Will the sahibs pay Boys for images?" Allen's Boy asked.

"No, certainly not." Maitland shouted, with an oath; "be off" And remembering the power of his foot, they beat a hasty retreat.

"Is that their punishment?" Allen asked.

"Oh, dear no; that is yet to come. By-the-by, I want you to sleep here tonight. Will you?"

"Certainly."

"That's all right then. Of course, your Boy must stay here also."

Allen and Maitland dined at the club that evening; and, for fear that their Boys might tamper with their food, dispensed with their services, and trusted to the club waiters. They returned home at ten o'clock and went to bed almost immediately.

About midnight, Allen was awakened by hearing two shrieks of terror in the compound. Jumping out of bed, he seized his revolver, and rushed on to the verandah where he found Maitland, in his pyjamas, peeping out through the shutters.

"What's the matter?" Allen asked anxiously.

"Look out and see."

Allen did. In the compound, hurrying towards the gate, were some twenty or thirty Hindus.

"There's been murder," he exclaimed excitedly; "they're carrying off two dead men."

"Our precious Boys," Maitland de-

clared, with a brutal laugh. "I knew that the only way they could obtain those two idols was by robbing a temple, and I was equally confident that they would be seen committing the theft and murdered after dark. Smart of me, wasn't it? The villains have been sent to kingdom come without all the bother of a trial, and you have obtained two valuable idols free of charge. Keep that one of Buddha, too I don't want it."

"I wouldn't have them now on any account," Allen declared hotly; "and if I had known what you contemplated, I would have taken steps to thwart your dastardly plans."

Maitland shrugged his shoulders. "If you change your mind, you'll find the two idols in my bedroom."

"I shall not change my mind."

"Very well, then; I'll take them to England and present them to some museum."

Allen could not sleep at all after returning to bed. His brain was on fire, for he felt that the blood of the Boys was upon his head. And, as he lay awake, gazing through his mosquito curtain at the rats scampering about his dressing-table, he saw his door slowly open and a fierce Hindu face appear. Thinking that he was one of Maitland's servants bent on stealing a few rupees from his pockets, he shouted at him. The man disappeared immediately, and Allen thought no more of him until about seven o'clock, when Maitland's *syce* rushed into his room and besought him to go to the *burra-sahib*. And when Allen entered Maitland's room, he found him lying dead on his bed with an Indian dagger buried in his heart. He had been dead some hours and the images of Vishnu and Lakshmi were gone.



THE sun was setting in radiant glory behind the walls of the old monastery of Kidaka, which, built on the sunny lotus-covered banks of the river of that name, had stood for years in hallowed silence, and held its sacred roof over hearts of innocence and heads golden and grey.

Standing there on a gentle slope, its gardens gliding away into fields of bamboo and rice, its windows looked down in their lofty silence upon a scene at once beautiful and gay.

Very different from the stern, hallowed monastery was the scene below: the one untouched by the outside world, the other, in a sense, the world itself.

The river—the mighty Kidaka—whose volume yearly rose and watered the rice-fields of the ancient monastery, passed but a short distance farther down the glorious tea-gardens owned by one Daikoku, a Japanese of quiet, studious habits, although possessing a homestead frequented by the pleasure-seekers of the city. The dainty bamboo structure of the tea-house, its many paper windows twinkling like mirrors in the sun's rays, its groves of scented cherry trees, its tiny waterfalls, and the air heavily laden with the perfume of many flowers were sufficient in themselves to inspire the would-be poet to eloquent flows of rapture, or to induce the gay merry-makers to stop their gondolas at the tea-house steps and quench their thirst with the golden saké while their ears were ravished with the sound of the mandolin or guitar. But the tea-

garden of Daikoku boasted a greater attraction than any of these; the whole life and sunshine, merriment and prosperity of the place were centred in Sosanoō, his beautiful and gilded daughter, who, though but young in years, was yet, alas! old in the powers of love and coquetry, and drove to madness and despair the hearts of youthful Japan, as she sent great glittering shafts of love from her brown eyes, while she handed round the tiny egg-shell cups, or sighed with passionate ardour under the shelter of the cherry groves.

It was this scene of life and merriment that the young bonzes of the monastery beheld from their windows. But from such worldly vanities were they held strictly aloof; they might not partake of the saké, nor of fish or meat; neither might they even speak to the women of the tea-houses.

To all save one of the monastery inmates these restrictions mattered but little. What cared they for tea gardens or cherry groves? Was not the sparkling water of their own dear river better than all the tea or saké in Japan, and had they not cherry groves rivalling in beauty and perfume those of Daikoku?

No, they wanted none of the frivolities of youth; they were content with their prayers and their rice-fields, their straw sandals and linen hats; all save Momotaro, the youngest, handsomest bonze of them all; and it had only been of late that he, to his misery and despair, had wished for other things.

But a few weeks ago, while hoeing the

sloping banks of the Kidaka, he had happened, by chance, to enter the gardens of Daikoku ; there, leaning upon his tool, he had caught sight of the wondrous beauty of Sosanoō, as with light step, her little white-stockinged feet going trip, trip, over the straw mats, the delicate pink of her cheeks rivalling the cherry blossoms around, she hung, with marvellous dexterity, the many-hued paper lanterns among the branches, and prepared, with joyous heart, the gardens for the coming éte.

The heart of Momotaro rose in his throat, and then sank again, only to smoulder away like an incense stick at the feet of Sosanoō.

Where were the rules of the monastery now ? Forgotten—gone—like a summer wind among the mangroves. His vows of silence mattered little, and dropping his ugly clumsy hoe on the river bank, he sped swiftly towards the busy girl, till, with flushed cheeks and trembling breath, he bowed his golden head and said falteringly :

“ Ohio gozarimasu ” (good morning).

Sosanoō looked up from her task, and recognising one of the sacred monks, for whose attentions she had long sighed in vain, turned with a ready, seductive smile and bade him welcome.

But the soft voice of the girl recalled his wandering senses, and turning abruptly from her, he quickly regained the river bank and resumed his work, steadfastly keeping his eyes on the ground.

Two nights later saw Momotaro back once more in the tea-gardens, wandering in glorious silence, side by side with Sosanoō, beneath the lantern-hung groves of cherry blossom.

“ Why were you not here last even-

ing ? ” she said softly. “ I waited for you till sunrise.”

Momotaro hung his head. “ I was afraid,” he answered.

“ Afraid of what ? ” and her great eyes beamed upon him till he was almost beside himself.

“ Of you,” he cried, falling on his knees, and seizing her tiny hands ; “ of your marvellous beauty and awful power ; of your sunny laugh, which rings in my ears through the grim silence of the monastery ; of the dainty trip of your feet, which intermingles all day with the clumsy flip-flap of the sandals of my fellow bonzes till I am almost frantic, and could fling aside my work, plunge through the monastery boundary and reach your presence in the tea-garden.”

Sosanoō listened, bewildered. She was used to love, it is true, but not love such as this, so evidently wrung from the utterer’s heart, and against his will.

For the first time in her life she was at a loss for a reply, and breaking from his side, entered her chamber, to reappear no more that night.

This scene was repeated again and again. Nightly Momotaro slipped quietly away from the unconscious monks, and visited the home of Sosanoō, till the girl, utterly against her will—for love, she felt, was a thing to be played with, not dealt with in real earnest—gave her heart into the keeping of the young bonze, and vowed eternal faithfulness. For weeks the lovers were entirely happy ; then a change came over Momotaro, and Sosanoō noticed, with fearful heart, the gradual coolness of his words and decreased ardour of his embrace. For days she endured this in silence, noting the increased



WITH A LIGHT STEP

diffidence every day, and wondering at its cause.

At last she could endure it no longer, and prayed her lover to explain his altered conduct.

With blushing cheeks, but firm words, Momotaro told her how, as the days passed, he found the love of a woman and the hours spent in her society in no wise equalling the happiness obtained within the grey, silent walls of the Kida-kai-n monastery. "He had not," he said, "meant to tell her so at once; but, gradually lessening his love, to open her eyes to the fact, and, he hoped, lessen her love for him. As she had sought to know the reason herself, it was well she should know this was his last visit to the tea-gardens of Daikoku, and from henceforth his love was to be given wholly to his sacred home."

Sosanoō stood as one transfixed, her eyes gazing vacantly into space, but in a moment this was changed, the true character of the Japanese girl, which had slumbered during the influence of Momotaro's love, awoke suddenly to life; all the hatred and cunning in her nature rose to the surface, and in a low voice, hoarse with suppressed hate, and bosom heaving with fury, she pointed, with uplifted finger, to the distant monastery as she cried:

"Go; return to your life of slavery. But remember, Sosanoō's love is not to be trifled with; and when next you behold the daughter of Daikoku her revenge will be ready for its fulfilment."

Thrilled by her words, but utterly unbelieving of the danger, Momotaro gladly re-entered the sacred walls, thanking the gods for his escape from the clutches of the world.

Meanwhile, Sosanoō, her heart bursting with anger, fled from the presence of the pleasure-seekers and the brilliant illuminations of her father's home, into the darkness of the night, right into the great and awful presence of the goddess Zudo, the holder of the sword of vengeance.

Here, her very anger, keeping back her fear, she begged the goddess to grant that the love of Momotaro might return to her, or, that this being impossible, a terrible vengeance might be granted her, with which to punish her unfaithful lover.

But to her dismay, her request was utterly refused, and she left the presence of the goddess filled with threefold hate against the unconscious Momotaro.

Baffled in her first attempt, she had yet another to fall back upon: recalling to her mind the great power possessed by her now dead mother, in the arts of magic and sorcery, and remembering through whose aid it was gained, she determined to give up all thoughts of the gay society and merry laughter of the tea-gardens, and devote her life to the black arts, in order to revenge herself utterly upon the absent monk.

With this end in view, she hastened to



MAKING RAPID STRIDES IN THE BLACK ARTS.

the dwelling of the ancient Kampira, who had been the only teacher of her mother, and whose skill was marvellous to behold.

Thus the beautiful and gifted Sosanoō disappeared from the tea-gardens of Daikoku, and the youth of Japan, missing her gay smile and ready answers, found their tea and saké lose their charm; the cherry groves lost their colour and perfume, the rivulets became silent in their way over the stones, the many-hued lanterns and cages of dazzling fireflies hung no more from the branches, the long poles, strung with gay ribbons and tinkling



"MY REVENGE IS COME."

belis, waved in the breeze no longer, and the fame of the tea-gardens of Dai-koku, became lost or forgotten; while the gondolas, sailing peacefully on the bosom of the river, passed the once-famous pleasure grounds, as they did the grim monastery, without once slackening their speed.

Meanwhile Sosanoō, utterly forgetting all else save her revenge, was making rapid strides in the black arts; already she almost equalled in power her long dead mother: but that was insufficient for her, and the unconscious Momotaro passed many years in peaceful ignorance, while the heart of Sosanoō was preparing for the final scene.

At last she felt herself perfect in her art; and, one night, while the inmates of the monastery slept in innocence, she sallied forth from the dwelling of her dreaded mistress, Kampira, and wended her way to her former home.

Horrified at the scene of desolation which greeted her on every side, her fury reached its height, and, exerting her powers, she drew from his quiet slumber

the wondering Momotaro, who found himself—he knew not why—wandering abroad in the dead of night.

Unconsciously his feet trod the old paths, and he found himself once more beneath the cherry trees, now radiant with bloom. The scene of his love story was long since forgotten, and when he beheld coming towards him Sosanoō, beautiful as ever; he remembered her not, but imagined her some exquisite vision of the night.

"Momotaro," she said softly, noting his changed looks and grey hair, "Momotaro, do you not love me? See, I wait for you as of old."

But in the eyes of the monk there was no recognition. "Who are you?" he said wonderingly.

"What! you remember me not? I, whom you have held clasped tightly in your arms—I, whom all Japan worship—who gave you all my love, held so grudgingly from the hearts of every prince. Then, indeed, have my years of toil not been in vain—my revenge is come."

Then, in soft, bewitching voice, she recalled to the monk's mind the scenes enacted long since, and Momotaro, remembering, praised the well-kept beauty of his past love and turned to go. But the voice of Sosanoō held him enthralled.

"Did I not vow," she cried, "that the love of the Japanese maiden should not be trifled with? Your doom is sealed, Momotaro the monk; but you shall die well," she said, with a delighted laugh. "A portion of your beloved monastery shall keep you company."

As she spoke there came to the ears of the terrified man the clanging of the monastery bell; louder and louder it became; harsh and triumphant in its clamour. There was a sound of distant banging, a parting of the trees, and into sight came the enormous bell, its tongue clanging in agony. One shrill cry of command from the girl, a huge leap on the part of the bell, and a moment later the monk was hidden in its cavity, and the tongue was silent.

Then arose on the midnight air the terrified cries of Momotaro, as he strove to break from his cage in vain. His appeals for mercy to his tormentor were heartrending.

But his doom was yet incomplete. The

form of Sosanoō was undergoing rapid changes, and at last, slimy and terrible, there crept from the gown of what was once a beautiful girl a huge serpent, which, winding itself slowly around the bell, crushed with its terrible body the iron sides. The cries within grew fainter and fainter till they ceased altogether, and serpent, bell and priest within became one great shapeless mass lying crushed and motionless beneath the falling petals of the pink-tipped blossoms.

Next morning the unsightly shape had vanished and all was as of old, save that the place of Momotaro was empty, and the bell swung from its beam no longer. And the monks, connecting the two facts together, said in mysterious whispers: "Our brother was so holy; see, he has been

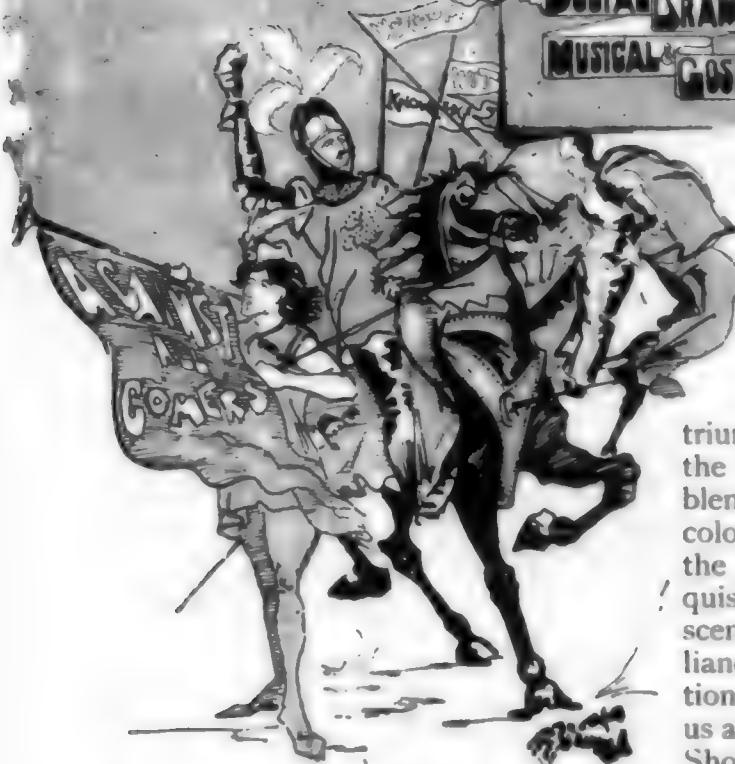
taken to the gods, and even our bell has vanished, meaning us not to toll in sorrow for him. Let us be gay, then, and weep not."

So the place of the bell remains empty and swings no more over the waters of the Kidaka; and the people, wondering, call it the "Monastery of the Silent Ones," and the youth of Japan have long since forgotten that those beautiful deserted cherry groves at which they marvel, once surrounded the far-famed tea gardens of Daikoku.



WINDING ITSELF SLOWLY ROUND THE BELL.

INCIDENTS OF THE SOCIAL DRAMATIC MUSICAL & COSSIPAL MONTH



DRAMATIC NOTES.

By FITZGERALD ARTHUR.

THIS year the Christmas productions have been more numerous than usual, and many of them greater successes than heretofore. The pantomime of "Dick Whittington," at Drury Lane, will rank as the very best that the popular lessee, Sir Augustus Harris, has given to his patrons. He has surrounded himself with the very best talent money can command, and among others I may mention such prime favourites as Miss Ada Blanche and Miss Marie Montrose, Messrs. Dan Leno and Herbert Campbell, hosts in themselves, to say nothing of the comical Brothers Griffiths and the stately and handsome Miss Agnes Hewitt.

"Dick Whittington" will be chiefly remembered for the number of gorgeous and brilliant scenes that are crowded into the pantomime. The first gives us a glimpse of the camp of King Cat, and

the "Tommy Catkins" (as the feline soldiers are humorously called) go through a series of evolutions that is most creditable to their teachers. The magnificent Chinese Ballet, illustrative of the Feast of Lanterns, is a triumph of the scenic master's art, the contrast and the harmonious blending of the rich and varied colours is exquisite, and the aid of the electric and lime lights is requisitioned to add further lustre to a scene already dazzling in the brilliancy of its conception and production. Later on Sir Augustus gives us a regular miniature Lord Mayor's Show, and as if this were not enough, he further adds a most gorgeous "Transformation Scene," which for originality is



MISS ADA BLANCHE AS "CRUSOE."



MISS KITTY LOFTUS

far ahead of anything that has as yet been seen. Mr. James Glover is once more responsible for the music, and not only has he given us a medley introducing many of the favourite airs of the last twelve months, but also many tuneful melodies from his own prolific pen.

At the Lyceum, Mr. Oscar Barrett, true to his reputation, has once more given us one of those delightful fairy extravaganzas, which he has led us always to expect from him. Last year his "Cinderella" was undoubtedly the production of all the Christmas shows, in town or in the provinces, and this year he has assuredly given us as refined and delightful a spectacle as that with which he packed the Lyceum for so many weeks last festive season. Further, Mr. Barrett has introduced that sensible proceeding of dividing his pantomime into two parts. Though "Santa Claus" is the name given by Mr. Barrett to this year's pantomime, Mr. Horace Lennard, who is responsible for the book, has pleasingly and artfully blended other fairy tales into his story, and following "Santa Claus" we have "The Babes in the Wood" and "Robin Hood and Maid Marian." It would take up too much

space and time, and then it would be but inadequately done, to describe fully the delightful series of scenes, which charm the eye from start to finish. The first is a truly Christmasy scene, snow and frost, whitened tree and plain, in fact, such a Christmasy scene as we read about in books, but, unfortunately, so seldom see nowadays, and here we meet the old friends of our childhood days, Santa Claus, with his boon companions Jack Frost, Holly and Mistletoe. Following all this we come on a delightful old English orchard, with its village church in the distance, and here we witness the revels of Robin Hood and his merry followers. In the second half we are furnished with a series of four delightful lands, *viz.*, "Dreamland," "Poppyland," "Snowland" and lastly "Loveland," and as if this was not surfeit enough, it is followed by a most excellent harlequinade, with Charles Lauri, the best of pantomimists, as clown.

Of course, Mr. Barrett is responsible for the merry and tuneful music, and he has surrounded himself with a galaxy of talent in the persons of Mr. William



MR. WILLIAM RIGNOLD

Rignold, who plays Santa Claus as no one else can play it; Mr. Fred Emney, a delightful old Sir Joseph Grimshaw; and Mr. Arthur Williams, who is good in whatever he undertakes. Miss Kitty Loftus, a pretty and vivacious lady, who acts and dances splendidly, and Miss Rosie Leyton, who ably seconds her. Mr. Victor Stevens deserves a special word of praise for his impersonation of "The New Woman," and Mr. Charles Lauri has endeared himself to, and made a lasting friend of, each and every youthful patron of "Santa Claus," by his imitable representation of the faithful and good old dog "Tatters." When I add Mr. Hawes Craven and Mr. Pritchard Barrett are responsible for the scenery, it will be a sufficient guarantee of its excellence. Truly Mr. Oscar Barrett has once more given us as pleasing and harmless a show as it has ever been my pleasure to witness.

At Daly's Theatre we have a version of "Hänsel and Gretel," by Herr Humperdinck, a musician who has suddenly come to the front in Germany; his music, which reminds one forcibly of Wagner in passages, is not only tuneful and melodious, but displays high musical ability. Great pains have been taken to produce this charming little opera artistically, the scenic arrangements are picturesquely beautiful, and the music of the orchestra is under the skilful *baton* of Signor Arditi, while among the leading artists are found Miss Marie Elba, Miss Julia Lennox, Miss Edith Miller, and Mr. Charles Copland, who all do justice to their parts. The plot is a simple one, and easily comprehended by the children, and in parts reminds one forcibly of "The Babes in the Wood," though studiers of folk-lore can

easily trace these different versions to their one and common origin.

At the Opera Comique a double show was started—in the afternoon "The House that Jack Built," as arranged by Mr. H. Chance Newton, being admirably played by a set of youngsters, and in the evening a piece called "Eastward Ho," which had some eighteen months before first seen the light under the title of the "Caliph," and since then had toured in the provinces disguised as "The Black Cat." It is a great pity that someone did not kill that Black Cat in the provinces, for, as "Eastward Ho," it only dragged out a miserable existence of six days; and as deeply as I sympathise with the author and composer, so as strongly do I condemn the producer.

I consider it a monstrous shame that any person should be allowed to gather round him and engage a body of actors and actresses for a Christmas or any other production, keep them rehearsing for several weeks prior to the first performance, and then withdraw the piece at the end of the first week, have difficulty over the payment of artists, and throw a lot of deserving people, actors and actresses, supers, stage hands and others, out of employment at a moment's notice. And what happened here? On the Friday or Saturday, when treasury was supposed to have been paid, the "ghost" refused to walk. On the Saturday evening so annoyed were the orchestra at the non-receipt of their hard-earned money, that they, in a body, struck in the middle of the performance, and the last act of this *screamingly funny* burlesque, or comic opera, had to get on as best it could, and the artists had to sing their songs and dance their little dances without a note of music. It matters



not to me to be told that all these good people have since received their full meed of wage, the fact still remains that the piece was produced without ample funds being provided, to meet at least one week's expenses, and because the public showed their very wise discretion, by choosing other places of better entertainment, this unpleasant *contretemps* occurred. This is by no means the only time such proceedings have taken place in London and the provinces; this, too, often by people of more or less celebrity, who, trusting to the importance, great or small, of their names, trust to luck for the £. s. d. part of the show. Surely it is time that some drastic measures were taken to check these iniquitous proceedings. Ambitious, and often misguided persons have a perfect right—this being a free country—to produce the incoherent outpourings of their distorted brains, and see if the public will be generous enough to gauge them with their own measure, but I do maintain, free country though it be, that these aforesaid ambitious, and often misguided persons have no right whatsoever to put up shows or produce plays, unless they have ample means to meet the contingencies attached thereto. We all heard, some time ago, about that marvellous body, "The Actors' Association," and though that body has been known on several occasions to settle minor matters, I have yet to learn that they have had the pluck to go for any of these more important personages.

"The Lady Slavey," after a somewhat successful tour in the provinces, has been produced at the Avenue Theatre. The cast has been considerably strengthened and it therefore proved a very acceptable show. Miss May Yohe, in the title *rôle*, acted and sang with great success, and Miss Blanche Barnett not only rendered her songs charmingly but looked so as



MR. J. DALLAS

well. The comedy part was in the hands of Mr. J. Dallas and Mr. G. Humphrey, and needless to say was all that was required. Indeed, Mr. Humphrey showed most excellent tact and judgment in his rendering of the character of the broken-down swell who was compelled, through the exigencies of circumstances, to become a broker's man and then a menial.

"An Ideal Husband," Mr. Oscar Wilde's new piece, was produced most successfully at the Haymarket, and is likely to fill the bill for some time. The Independents put up "Thyrsa Fleming" for a week, and in a more or less creditable performance an opportunity was given Miss Winifred Frazer and Mr. William Bonney which they were not slow to avail themselves of, and to which they did justice.



MR. GEORGE HUMPHREY IN "THE LADY SLAVEY"

Foreigners have often told us that we have to go abroad to hear good music, or find capable musicians, and for many years there was a great deal of truth in this, but latterly this country has produced many as good and capable musicians as are to be found the world over. For this reason the Royal College of Music, which was incorporated by Royal Charter in 1883, and has for its President H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, deserves special word of praise. Students are here carefully trained in every branch of music, and annually they produce some opera to convince the public what excellent work they are

doing. Some few weeks ago, at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, they gave us "Le Roi l'a dit," a comic opera in three acts, written by Edmond Gondinet, and composed by Leo Delibes. The story is a simple one; how an old Marquis, anxious to be presented at Court, at last has his ambition gratified, and in his extreme nervousness thereat, on being asked by the King as to whether he has a son, admits the soft impeachment, though ne'er a one has he. The King requests to see him, and the Marquis in his embarrassment calls in the aid of a dancing and deportment master, one Miton, to help him out of his difficulty. Miton assures him that nothing will be easier, and provides one, Benoit, a rustic, to be this spurious son. Benoit, natu-

rally, in his exalted position, is guilty of numerous *faux-pas*, and many are the ludicrous situations in consequence. The entire production reflected the greatest credit on the College of Music, and on the students taking part therein. Many far worse performances have I witnessed, by companies composed of well-known professional artists. Of course, I would not for one moment have it understood that the production was faultless, far from it. Take the first act: here the stage management was very deficient, and had the students been properly and conscientiously drilled by some master in stage craft, Mr. Hugh



Moss, for instance, then assuredly would that act have gone with much more evenness and smoothness than it did; but for this the students were not to blame, they individually and collectively did their best and did it well. The success of the production was undoubtedly the Marquis de Moncontaur, played by Mr. Albert Archdeacon. This young artist is gifted with a rich, pure, baritone voice, and knows how to use it, his rendering of his songs eliciting hearty applause; but not only did Mr. Archdeacon distinguish himself in his vocal numbers, but he also showed a decided talent in his acting. I do not think it would be too much to say that if Mr. Archdeacon will only go on as he has started he has a great and

brilliant future before him. Mr. H. Winslow Hall also distinguished himself as Benoit; he has a delightful tenor voice of a light and pleasing *timbre*, and rendered his numbers with much artistic ability. A word of praise is also due to Mr. Fritz Hart for his excellent and comic



MISS ENA BEDFORD

rendering of the part of the French dancing-master, M. Miton. Of the eight ladies who took part in the performance, everyone deserves as much praise and credit as I can give her. Miss Lunn made a most dignified Marquise, while Miss Seigne was a *piquante* and vivacious Javotte. Miss Pierpoint and



MISS MATRICE LYNTON



MISS GRACE M. STANHOPE

Miss Sim not only sang and acted well as the two lovers of the daughters of the Marquis, but they also looked particularly handsome in their costumes, and the Misses Scott, Stanhope, Lynton, and Bedford were the four daughters, who not only enacted their parts gracefully,



MR. ALBERT ARCHDEACON

but were also a very charming quartette of daughters, of whom the Marquis was very proud, and which he did not attempt to disguise throughout the performance. The greatest praise is due to Dr. Stanford for the manner in which he led his most excellent orchestra, chiefly composed of pupils of the College, and I

may add that it is my sincere hope that the Royal College of Music will give us as excellent a performance this year, and that I may be able to be there to witness it. I am given to understand that H.M. the Queen has given her Royal command for a performance of this opera at Windsor Castle on or about the 8th of February.

Just as we are going to press, the long-promised "King Arthur" has been produced at the Lyceum. Mr. Irving has done all that money and human ingenuity can do; Mr. Comyns Carr has given us a play that is scholarly in every respect; Sir Edward Burne-Jones has brought his vast experience to bear on the *tableaux* with the happiest and most charming results. The scenes, painted by Messrs. Hawes Craven and Harker, are triumphs of their art, and the production is an ideally beautiful one. Mr. Forbes Robertson, as Lancelot, is the chief attraction and success, his elocution and declamation being perfect; indeed, Mr. Robertson has never been



MR. W. WINSLOW HALL

seen to better advantage.... Miss Ellen Terry's Queen Guinevere is as graceful and charming a performance as one could wish. I shall hope to give a fuller critique of the play in my next notes.

NOTIONS FROM AN EASY CHAIR.

By JOHN A. STEUART.

ONE rejoices to learn that at last a hook is to be put in the jaws of the gentle jerry-builder. He has been very much with us of late. On all hands specimens of his fictions in brick confront us, and it seemed that in his gay, high way he was going to do with the metropolis just as he liked. His style was showy, and his manner bewitchingly cavalier. The celerity with which he built "charming modern residences" was amazing. Not less amazing was the celerity with which most of them went to ruin when his magic hand was withdrawn, and the lofty manner in which he declined to be responsible for the results. The "London Building Act of 1894" promises to arrest him in his dazzling career of aggrandisement. Perhaps he will now



cease to play with men's lives and will condescend to build houses, not as if he wished to have the fun of seeing them tumble in the first puff of wind, but as if they were really meant for human habitation. Personally it has often been a cause of surprise to me how London houses, especially suburban villas, stood until the builder got rid of them, or how the paste-board walls bore up under the weight of the roof. Usually, of course, several houses were built together, and one served as a prop to the other; but even with such mutual aid it was astonishing how they kept up. In many instances it appeared that if a strong man were to put his shoulder briskly to a gable or corner a whole block must inevitably be wrecked. When finished—that is to say, when the paper-hanger, the carpenter, and the decorator



had done their share of the work—the houses had generally an attractive appearance, for the jerry-builder had mastered the art of creating exaggerated match-boxes in the very similitude of dwellings. It is a great art, and greatly has it been practised, as unfortunate householders have reason to know; but all things have an end. Some end

suddenly; some drag to a lingering close; let us hope that jerry-building is "stopped short," and will be known among us no more for ever. It is one of the blessings of civilisation with which civilised people will probably be able to dispense.

* * *

Another Act which ought to be hailed as a good augury for the New Year, came into operation on the first of January, and is intended for the pro-



tection of members of building societies. These societies hold investments in England to the tune of £50,000,000, a considerable item in the country's savings. The subscribers or depositors number in round figures 580,000, most of them being working men. The law now provides that depositors and shareholders shall know something of the assets of the concerns in which they happen to be interested. Parliament has long been trying to make up its mind whether it ought to interfere in such matters, and not until our thrifty population had suffered losses to the enormous extent of seven millions sterling could it arrive at a decision. But better late than never, and now it will be the fault of depositors themselves if they invest in insolvent societies. By-and-bye we shall be an ideal people.

• * * *

"Canst thou weigh the earth in a balance?" asked the ancient sage; and the modern philosopher answers blithely, "Why certainly." The exact weight of our venerated planet is not, perhaps, a matter of pressing importance to the average man. The average man, indeed, has probably never thought of putting our general parent into the scales, never so much as imagined the thing possible. But the average man (with reverence be it spoken) has, in the Yankee phrase, considerable to learn. It will, doubtless, be news to him to hear that our earth, a mere mite in the systems of the universe, kicks the beam at five thousand eight hundred and eighty-two million million tons. Who, you ask, has made that astounding discovery? I answer proudly, an

Oxford Professor. They know a great deal at Oxford; indeed one wonders how so few pates of not more than average size can hold so much. Bacon, I believe, was a Cambridge man, but the sister university has seized upon his province of universal knowledge. Oxford is the burning and the shining light of our benighted age. On the darkest subject she sheds a piercing light. If you are in doubt, go to Oxford; if anything in the Cosmogony of the world puzzles you, consult Oxford. If there is anything in Heaven above, or the earth beneath, or the waters under the earth that you do not quite comprehend, apply to Oxford. If you ask Why am I here? and the oracle is dumb, enquire of Oxford. If the caprices of Fate and the prickings of conscience disturb you o' nights, communicate with Oxford. In a word, if you are in darkness, or tribulation, or perplexity, or remorse, or fear, resort at once to Oxford. All things are known at Oxford. When Mr. Stevenson asked the "Spaewife" about some matters that he did not understand, she merely replied, "Oh, it's gey an' easy speirin'." Oxford would reply to more purpose. And of course the weight of the earth is a mere trifle in her vast accumulation of knowledge.

• * *



It was only recently, however, that her inquisitive sons thought of weighing this terrestrial ball. Perhaps they ran short of amusements; perhaps, but it is idle to speculate—we have the fact that it was only the other day the idea of putting the globe in scales occurred to the teeming brain of Oxford. So the Oxford Professor got him into his

underground laboratory, and there, with machinery of inconceivable delicacy and complexity he began his operations. "He was watching," says the report, "with a telescope, the slow oscillations of the mirror on which is chronicled the extent of the tension of the quartz fibre, from which depend two gold balls a quarter of an inch in diameter. These gold balls are attracted by larger balls of lead suspended by phosphor bronze wires. The attraction between the two sets of balls is analogous to the attraction between the heavenly bodies and their satellites. The force of attraction, as every school-board boy may nowadays be expected to know, is equal to the mass of one body multiplied by the mass of the other and divided by the square of the distance between them, the whole multiplied by the Newtonian Constant 'G.'" There you are! As he watched, something happened, as the novelists say. The earth shuddered. To an ordinary person the tremour might be ascribed to surprise and apprehension on the part of the Earth: but the Oxford Professor knew better. "An earthquake," he remarked quietly; and sure enough next morning the newspapers reported a shock in some remote part of the Continent. That was feather number one in the Professor's cap. Feather number two was set there a little later, when at dead of night, perhaps with a company of intelligent ghosts peering curiously over his shoulder, our Professor completed his calculations and was able to say, "Our earth with its rocks, its mountains, caves, rivers, lakes, oceans, weighs precisely so much." The report does not state that he was in the least elated. Any man outside of Oxford making so momentous a discovery would have suffered an acute attack of swelled head; but they are accustomed to big things at Oxford and are not easily excited. Doubtless they will now calmly proceed to weigh the Heavens and set a girdle about the stars. Marvellous creatures!

When a leg is amputated whose property does it become? Does it remain part of the personal effects of the original owner, or does it pass legally to him of

the saw and scalpel? The point is a nice one and has recently given rise to a law suit. A lady in Brussels lost a limb by amputation, and the gentleman who relieved her of the incumbrance appropriated the leg. Carrying the treasure home with him he stowed it in a jar of spirits of wine and had it exhibited in his consulting room as evidence of his professional skill. That there might be no deception he carefully inscribed the jar with the name and address of the original owner of the leg. The lady's husband, hearing of this singular exhibition, and not relishing such a mode of obtaining notoriety, called upon the surgeon to withdraw the leg. The surgeon declined, saying that the leg was his. There was a time, he admitted, when the plaintiff did unquestionably exercise proprietary rights over it, but circumstances, it was pointed out, alter cases. The defendant had removed the leg; it got into the jar by virtue of his skill, and therefore he intended to keep it and do with it as he liked. Thereupon the lady's husband invoked the aid of the law. The Court, on hearing the evidence, stroked its chin, looked perplexed, and after much ruminating, intimated that it would take time to consider its verdict.

* * * *

Meanwhile, the case suggests some grave reflections. Suppose a man meets with an accident and has a leg taken off, is the person who removes it at liberty to put it under his arm, walk away with it, and, if he be so minded, exhibit it in a jar of spirits of wine? It would be a sight more novel than pleasant to see a part of oneself in a jar, nicely labelled, and to be told, on complaining of rude treatment, that one was no longer one's own owner, that, in fact, one was there, so to speak, as a prize exhibit. It is bad enough, as Hamlet remarked, to be knocked about disrespectfully when we are dead, but to be perched on a conspicuous shelf in a surgeon's consulting room while we are still alive and kicking is a little too much for human equanimity. When man ceases to breathe and is laid to sleep with his fathers, it is hard to say what

fate may befall him, I mean the corporeal part of him. Sir Thomas Browne (a philosopher and moralist too little read nowadays), in his quaint and eloquent "Um Burial," speculates touchingly on the accidents to which our bones are liable when we are done with them. Well! when we are done with them it, perhaps, matters little what happens to them; but while they are still in use we really ought to retain control of them. Of course, the bones of an amputated leg are not in use. That is the difficulty. A person with only a single nether limb may truly be said to have one foot in the grave, unless, indeed, an enterprising surgeon decides on plumping it in spirits of wine. 'Tis a consummation devoutly to be dreaded. The Brussels law suit is important to us all, as establishing a momentous precedent. Heaven save us from the enterprising surgeon.

* * * *

Last year there were published in this happy and enlightened country, 5,300 new books, or an average of fifteen works a day. Yet there are people who grumble, as if fifteen books were not enough for the twenty-four hours. One can only reply that authors have done their best—I mean as to quantity; quality is not to be reckoned in figures. Fancy the amount of scribbling there is in 5,300 books; and I blush to think that I am one of the sinners, one of the many who have presumed to make claims upon the attention of a long-suffering and generous public. It is not until the crime has, in commercial parlance, been "totalled" at the end of the year that one realises one's own enormities. Well, I hope we

shall all be forgiven. Perhaps the production of a book is rather a folly than a crime, and follies may be overlooked—at worst, they may be pitied.

How many of the 5,300 promising youngsters will survive to the age of fifty? Not many; indeed, it is not improbable that ere half-a-century has passed oblivion will have swallowed them all. Such catastrophes happen. Meanwhile some of them are interesting, were it only because they are doomed to be short-lived. One of the best at which I have lately glanced is "A Man of his Word," by Arthur Paterson (Osgood and Co.). It is a tale of American frontier life, and is told with unflagging spirit. "Elder Conklin," by Frank Harris (Heinemann), another tale of American life, suggests Bret Harte a little too much to be quite satisfactory. But the book (it contains several short stories) has fairly good points, and may be read without danger of excessive yawning. Mark Twain's "Pudd'nhead Wilson" (Chatto and Windus) may be confidently commended as a cure for the blues. The reader who does not laugh uncontrollably over it has no sense of fun in his soul, and should be condemned for ever to the Plitudinarian School—say, to A.K.H.B. Finally, those who are in any way interested in Venice, who have read of Venice, who have visited or intend to visit Venice, should study "Venice Depicted by Pen and Pencil" (Sampson Low, Marston and Co.) It is the handsomest volume published during the Christmas season, and is crammed with fascinating material, literary and pictorial.

J. A. S.

PUZZLEDOM

176. Transpose the following letters and find a French motto:

A E E H I I I L M N N O O P Q S S T U Y.

177. A Riddle.

Those who take me improve, be their task what it may;
Those who have me are sorrowful through the long day;
I am hated alike by the foolish and wise,
Yet without me none ever to eminence rise.

178. A Numerical Enigma.

My 6, 8, 9, 3, is a bird.

My 9, 8, 7, 6, is a rapacious animal.

My 4, 2, 7, 5, is a plant which produces beautiful flowers.

My 6, 2, 1, is a fruit.

My 1, 11, 10, 5, is a colour.

My whole is a flower.

CONUNDRUMS.

179. Why is a spider a good correspondent?

180. What does an artist like to draw best?

181. Why is an umbrella like a pancake?

182. What are the most difficult ships to conquer?

Five Prizes of Three-Volume Novels, cloth bound, will be awarded to the First Five Competitors sending in correct, or most correct, answers by 20th February. Competitions should be addressed "February Puzzles, THE LUDGATE ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE, Temple House, Temple Avenue, London, E.C. Post cards only, please.

ANSWERS TO JANUARY PUZZLES.

169. *Welcome.*

170. *An Echo.*

171. *S*

G E M
P E R I L
G E N E R A L
S E R E N A D E R
M I R A C L E
L A D L E
L E E
R

172. *A Match.*

173. *Because it is the fruit of good living.*

174. *The Book of Nature.*

175. *Because he wants repeating.*

The following are the names and addresses of the five winners in Puzzledom in our December Number, to whom the Three-Volume Novels have been sent:—Miss E. C. Fellows, Minworth, Birmingham; Miss K. Rae, 20, Stoke Terrace, Devonport; Miss E. Spiller, 5, Crumlin Terrace, Belfast; G. A. Bigg, 33, Cornwallis Crescent, Clifton, Bristol; H. M. Finch, 6, Plowden Buildings, Temple, E.C.

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Yours faithfully,
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 He had drawn the little dear,
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And then he said, "For kisses, May,
 From your lips I so hunger,
 You mustn't pout to hear me say,
 I'm glad you are not younger."

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